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"TAKE THIS CHILD AND NURSE IT FOR ME, AND I WILL
GIVE THEE THY WAGES."





L

HOLLY & IVY

A Story of a

WINTER BIRD'S

NEST.



BATH • BINNS AND GOODWIN
LONDON • HOULSTON • MARLBOROUGH.

HOLLY AND IVY :

THE STORY OF

A Winter "Birds' Nest."

BY MISS DAVIES,

AUTHOR OF "GLORIOUSLY HAPPY," ETC.

SECOND EDITION.



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DEDICATED

TO

The Members of the Children's Association,

WHO WITH LOVING HEARTS AND SELF-DENYING LABOURS

HAVE HELPED TO BUILD "THE NEST"

AND FEED THE BIRDS

WHO HAVE FOUND SHELTER FROM THE WINTER STORMS,

BY THEIR GRATEFUL FRIEND

THE SECRETARY.

SARAH DAVIES,
8, Merrion-square, North,
Dublin.

have early learned to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and are earnestly longing to have something to do for Him. When He was here on earth He took the little children in His own arms and blessed them. He cares for them still, and looks down on them with compassionate love, but He looks to His people to comfort them.

It was because there were so many poor little children to be comforted that The Birds' Nest was opened; and it was because so many dear children in happy homes wanted to help, that we formed what we call the CHILDREN'S ASSOCIATION, to the members of which this little book is dedicated.

The Association was formed in the year 1860, and at the end of the year I found that the children had sent in no less than thirty-five pounds! This success led me to form large expectations, and I looked forward to the next year with the hope that we should get one hundred pounds! On making up the accounts at the close of the year, I was delighted to find that my large expectations had not only been realized, but that they were not large enough, for I found we had one hundred and eleven pounds! so we went on working with glad hearts. Many little plans

were laid to interest children and get new collectors; several times we invited all within reach to tea, and then we had nice addresses for them; but as there are many children working at a great distance, meetings are not enough, so a small book is written every year, which we call **THE CHILDREN'S PART OF THE REPORT**; it has a picture on the back like the cards, and it is small enough to be inclosed in letters. We also write news of The Birds' Nest in a little magazine which is largely circulated in England, called "Erin's Hope," so that even if the members of the Association get no information besides that which is printed, they would be well supplied; but they often write to the secretary for more news, for some of them have taken up special children to collect for, and they want to know about their individual pets. Many of these dear working children are so small, that they have to make out letters in printed characters; and some even get others to write for them. It is a comfort to know that Jesus does not despise the day of small things. He welcomes the very least into His great army of working soldiers. There are none too young, none too small to work for Him. True, each can do only a little, but when all the

little rills run together they make a great stream of blessing, so great that the accounts of 1862 show that the children and their secretary gathered together no less than two hundred and eighty-nine pounds.

But though the children have done much, it is not yet a fourth of what is wanted for the daily expenditure of such an institution. In this great work there is room enough for all, and we would earnestly call upon all those into whose hands this book may fall, to come forward and help. We know there are many calls upon the purse of charity, but amongst the many claiming the sympathies of those whom God has made stewards of His bounty, homes for the destitute must ever take a high place. And why? Because our Father in heaven comforts His dying people with the sweet promise, "Leave Thy fatherless children, and I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in ME."—Because the only-begotten Son, in His wondrous life on earth, left us an example that we should love little children.—Because when in His risen body, He talked with His disciples, and would have from Peter a proof of constant love, He said, "Feed my lambs!" Now He is gone and

we are left to follow out the path He traced ; and as, alone or in companies, His servants tread that path, He looks down with a kindly eye and sympathizing heart. Oh ! let us never forget, that in caring for the orphan, we are working for Him who took a little child and set him by Him, that we have a smile from Him who said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me." Oh ! then—

"Aim to be like Jesus ; walk with God,
Look up to learn your heavenly Father's will—
Look round the earth on which your Saviour trod—
And when you find a child of sorrow, ill,
Forlorn, and helpless, toiling up the hill,
Be thou a loving angel, and thy face,
In tending it, shall shine as angels' do ;
As shine those sons of light in that high place
Hid for a little while from mortal view,
Where, if you follow Christ, you'll be an angel too."

The Birds' Nest shelters one hundred and fifty of these "forlorn and helpless" ones. They have been taken out from the wide world, and brought together, not without many fears that funds might not come in for their support. But the cases were so pressing, that one after another the Committee *could* not refuse ; and they felt

that He who caused twelve baskets of fragments to remain after the multitude had fed on five barley loaves, would also cause a blessing to rest on the "basket and store" of the The Birds' Nest, if only the children were received in His name.

So the poor little friendless ones have found a *home* on earth, where they are being trained for a *Home* in glory—

"A home so happy and so bright,—
A home of rest above—
Where clothed in raiment pure and white
In that sweet home of love,
No more a ragged orphan wild,
But dressed in white array,
Our God shall own the homeless child,
And wipe its tears away."

“ Is there a thing beneath the skies
O'er which the gentle Saviour yearns,
Which finds such favour in His eyes,
Whose tearful cry He never spurns ?
It is that little thing so wild,
A poor, neglected, lonely child.

O teach that little one to sing
The numbers tuneful, soft and clear,
Hosanna to the Shepherd bring,
Such as that Shepherd loves to hear—
Such as He heard when meek He rode
To Salem, His ordain'd abode.

Such as His gracious ear again
Shall welcome from young hearts set free,
Whom THOU hast rescued from the chain
Of sin and woe ; hast taught to flee
To Him who left yon heavenly land
To take a wanderer by the hand.”

CHAPTER II.

"AND ELISHA SAID, I PRAY THEE LET A DOUBLE PORTION OF THY SPIRIT BE UPON ME."—2 Kings ii. 9.

It was in the month of July, 1859, four ladies were sitting together in a small room in one of the back streets of Dublin. They were met to arrange the weekly business of a Home for Destitute Girls, and to see those who wished for admission.

There were many came that day seeking a shelter, girls who had no place to call "home," who had slept, some of them, for many a night, in the damp air, crouched in some doorway, or perhaps an open shed, and as many as they could those ladies received in the name of Jesus.

But amongst the applicants came a woman bringing a little girl of three years of age. She had been deserted by her mother a year before, and this woman, poor as she was, had taken her

to her heart and home ; but now worse poverty had come upon her, she could keep the little one no longer. It was not the first time such little ones had come there. Once two little ones came hand in hand, their poor little bodies scarcely covered with wretched rags, their hair tangled, their faces unwashed, and as they stood together they looked round with a wondering, half-frightened air, and their faces, which ought to have been bright with smiles and fun, were marked by a serious, careworn look, very sad to see in such little things. Their mother was dead, and their father was gone, and they had no home and no food but the breakfast they got in the Ragged School. But these two, and many others, had been sent away because the Home was for great girls ; there was no room for little ones. But now the sad case of the little Delia touched the heart of one of the ladies very deeply ; and Jesus, who longs to have the little ones come to Him, put into her heart a thought :—" We must have a Home for the poor little ones," she said. " There are many children to whom God has given plenteously, and they will gather the money to feed them, and so the rich and the poor amongst the

lambs of the fold will be united together, and God will be glorified." The woman was told to call again with Delia, and something should be done.

That day the ladies sat long together, and they asked God's blessing on the work of their hands. Before they separated, the youngest amongst them, the one into whose heart the thought came, had determined that she would be responsible for the new "Home;" "It shall be in the country," she said, "and we will call it 'THE BIRDS' NEST.'"

The first thing this good lady did was to write an article in the little magazine called "Erin's Hope," telling of the new idea, and asking children to help; and then a committee of four ladies was formed.

It was some little time before a suitable house could be found, but at last one was discovered up a little country road near Kingstown. It belonged to a kind gentleman, who, when he knew what it was wanted for, charged a very low rent. It was just the thing for a nest of birdies, snug and small, and having roses climbing up the small porch, as you will see in the picture on the title page.

The house wanted some repairs, and the introduction of gas pipes before it would be ready to be inhabited ; but however, by the end of September all was finished, and the ladies assembled in the new Nest. The first thing they did was to kneel down to thank God that He had so far helped them, and to pray that a great blessing might rest upon that Home, and that it might be a nursery for heaven. Then they chose a nice motherly woman for a matron, and little Delia was brought in and adopted as the first nestling ; then came another girl, a little older, and a boy and girl (brother and sister) ; thus we had four to begin with, and very happy they were in their Home.

We could not afford to buy bedsteads, but every child had a little sack, filled with straw, laid on the floor with a pair of sheets and blankets, and as we admitted more children into the Nest, the number of these little beds increased, till at last they were so thickly laid, side by side, that it was with difficulty we could step about the rooms ; there were forty children.

Week after week the committee of The Birds'

Nest met ; and week after week they met with two great difficulties ; one was, that money did not come in as fast as it was wanted, but for this there was a remedy,—prayer and work. The other difficulty was, how to refuse the multitude of poor children who pressed for admission ; it was so very hard to turn them away, and think that they must continue to wander the streets, faint and weary ; and the ladies prayed very much for guidance. They felt as if God was saying to them, “ Take these children and nurse them for Me, I will give you money.” And so they determined that as soon as possible they would build a Home which would hold one hundred and fifty, and they would write down in a book the cases of the children who were left without, that as soon as there was room they might all be taken in.

The little children who had found a home in The Birds' Nest were very busy, and very happy. They rose early in the morning, and dressed and washed themselves. Then there were beds to make, and rooms to sweep ; after which they assembled in a long room at the back of the house for prayer. After comfort-

able, warm breakfasts of cocoa and bread, hats and bonnets were brought out, and the little party set off two and two, followed by their kind matron to the mission school, and in many a home, as they passed, kind voices said "Here come the children," and kind faces looked out upon them and blessed them, and the clatter of forty pairs of wooden clogs was a constant reminder to collectors to be up and doing.

But the clatter of the clogs was heard by enemies too. There were some who were angry because the children were taken by Protestants, and taught the Bible. They would break up The Nest if they could, and many a scheme was laid for the purpose.

The children knew they had enemies, and that they were always in danger ; but they knew God as their Father, they knew they were safe only under His protection, and so they learned to trust in God. Up in the dormitories at night they met for prayer, and a few trees in the garden formed a tabernacle where these dear children often met with God. Frequently in the play-time the voice of mirth would be stopped, and you might hear sweet

children's voices joining in a hymn. And then the music would cease, and the voice of one after another might be heard in earnest prayer.

About this time, the children's friend who had determined to have The Nest, wrote a very nice hymn for them, suited to their peculiar circumstances. She meant it to be sung to the tune of "Uncle Ned," a negro melody. She always liked lively tunes for the children, because the little ones could learn them.

"I saw in a valley a happy little flock,
They lie in a pleasant fold ;
The Shepherd who owns them is kind and good,
He loves them with love untold.

Come all ye who hear, who hear,
Come, and never fear :
There's room for all,
And the Shepherd doth call,
Oh, come, and be happy here !

Those sheep were lost and wandering once,
And the wolf went about to destroy ;
But the Shepherd sought them through wood,
waste, and hill,
And brought them here with joy.
Come all, &c.

He made them a fold under green, green trees,
Which healing leaves do bear,
Close by the stream of the water of life,
And he leads His saved ones there.
Come all, &c.

The Shepherd saved those lost wandering sheep,
For He fought with their cruel foe ;
And in His blood, then shed for them,
He washed them as white as snow.
Come all, &c.

And He will take them one happy, happy day,
To a fairer, lovelier home,
Across the mountains, far, far away,
Where the wolf no more can roam.
Come all, &c.

Come, young and old, to this happy Gospel fold,
To this tender Shepherd's care,
For none can go to that lovely distant home,
Till His saving grace they share.

Come all ye who hear, who hear,
Come, and never fear :
There's room for all,
And the Shepherd doth call,
Oh, come, and be happy here."

But, almost before the children had learned
the hymn, their dear friend was called by the
Good Shepherd to His fold above. Brightly

and beautifully had her light shone on earth, and ~~and~~ too soon for us who were left behind was she called away, but we tried to say, "Thy will be done."

The children of the Birds' Nest were not the only rescued ones who mourned her loss. When her death was announced, the Ragged School was a place of weeping. She was a daughter of the late Archbishop Whately, and though lately married, died at her father's house. Some time before her death, she had expressed a wish that her funeral might have none of the usual pomp about it, but that her dear *poor* people might be her mourners. When she was gone, her father remembered her wish. A plain hearse left the palace door, with just two mourning carriages, but on the way to the family burying-place, four miles out of town, the procession increased. There were the Scripture Readers and teachers of the Irish Church Mission Society, a sorrowing troop of boys and girls from the schools, and a group of mothers, with their babies in their arms, who had formed her Sunday School class. These and many others joined the train, and filled the church. Then all assembled

round the grave, and listened to a solemn address by the missionary, and, as well as they could for tears, they all sang—

“ Shall we ever all meet again ?

Yes we may all meet again,

If not on earth, in heaven we may all meet again.

Shall we ever all wear a crown ?

Yes, we may all wear a crown,

If not on earth, in heaven we may *all* wear a
crown.

Tears shall be all wiped away,

If not on earth, in heaven tears shall be all wiped
away.”

It was a solemn scene, and many a heart too sorrowful to join in the singing was raised in prayer that the spirit of love so richly given to the departed one might fall on others, that the destitute ones might not be forgotten, and so it came to pass that many hearts were stirred up, and it was determined that the new building to be erected for The Birds' Nest should be a monument to the memory of Mrs. George Wale.

CHAPTER III.

"HE MAKETH THE STORM A CALM."—Psalm cvii. 29.

WE have spoken of the enemies of these dear children ; we had often thought that some attack might be made upon them, but for seven months they were allowed to come and go unmolested, and we began to think it would always be so, and perhaps we were forgetting who it is that sends the peace and quietness, and so trial came.

On Sunday night, May the 6th, about half-past eight, when the little children were just going to bed, a rattling sound was heard on the roof, then another, then another, and then a window was broken by the blow of a large stone.

The stones seemed to be coming from the front, and so the matron gathered the children together in the back. They were very much

frightened, but they knew God could defend them, and they knelt in prayer. The pelting of stones continued two whole hours, and in the morning was renewed ; but not a child was hurt.

On Tuesday evening, as the children were sitting at their supper in the back room, a large stone came in at the window, just grazed the ear of one child, and passed close to the mistress's head as she was stooping down. It was very remarkable that the little ones who usually sat along that window had been put to bed an hour before their usual time. Had they been there one at least must have been killed. See how God watches over His children, and guides them even in small things ! On Wednesday four extra police were sent to guard the house, two in front, and two at the back. The pelting ceased, and it was never discovered who threw the stones ; but when ladders were got to clear the roof, thirty-two stones were found, some five and a half pounds weight ! It was very wonderful that no little child was hurt. No, not *wonderful* ! Does not Jesus say, " The very hairs of your head are all numbered ? "

A few days after this storm I was at The Birds' Nest, and talking to the children about it, I said, "But how is it no one was hurt?" They all looked very serious, and one little girl said, "Sure, Ma'am, it was the Lord took care of us!"

Ah! the little children of The Birds' Nest have learned to feel how strong God is; and they rely upon the promise written in the ninety-first psalm—"He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust."

Fear Not.

"Yea, fear not—fear not, little ones;
There is in Heaven an eye
That looks with yearning fondness down
On every path you try.

'Tis He who guides the sparrow's wing,
And guards her little brood;
Who hears the ravens when they cry,
And fills them all with food.

'Tis He who clothes the fields with flowers,
And pours the light abroad;
'Tis He who numbers all your hours,
Your Father and your God.

Ye are the chosen of His love,
 His most peculiar care ;
 And will He guide the fluttering dove,
 And not regard your prayer ?

Nay, fear not—fear not, little ones ;
 There is in heaven an eye
 That looks with yearning fondness down
 On all the paths you try.

He'll keep you when the storm is wild,
 And when the flood is near ;
 Oh, trust Him, trust Him, little child,
 And you have nought to fear."

CHAPTER IV.

"THY WILL BE DONE."

IF you think what misery many of our little birdies have gone through before they are taken into the Nest, you will not be surprised when I tell you that we have a good deal of sickness, and many of them continue delicate for some time after they are taken in. But it was not till the early summer of 1860 that one died. Measles broke out amongst the children, many of them took it, but only one was dangerously ill. This was little Nanny Slattery, a dear child of about six years of age. It was Saturday night when the doctor said there was no hope, but Nanny was not at all afraid to die. On Sunday she was singing her favourite hymn, "Come to Jesus," in quite a loud voice. Many times during the day she clasped her little hands in prayer,

murmuring portions of the Lord's prayer,—
"Father in heaven, Thy will be done ; forgive
our trespasses."

In the middle of Sunday night she died. When the other children got up in the morning, they felt very sad to think that one was entirely gone away, but their sadness was mixed up with joy, for they knew Nanny was with Jesus, and they could not help feeling as if they themselves were a little nearer heaven than they were before. On Tuesday morning the body was to be buried, and a little grave was prepared in a corner of the old graveyard around the ruins of the Kill of the Grange.

The sun was shining bright and warm, and the birds were singing in the budding trees, and as we waited in the grave-yard we thought of the resurrection morning, when those graves shall be opened, and the bodies of Christ's people shall arise, beautiful and glorious. This was a joyful thought. Then we looked at the many grave-stones placed over Roman-catholics who had been buried hoping for nothing better than purgatory ; and we mourned there should be so many still living in the like ignorance.

But while we thought on these things there came a sound of solemn singing, and looking towards the road we saw the funeral procession. The coffin, borne by eight of the school-boys in turn, was followed by thirty little children of the Nest, and many more school-fellows with the teachers. As they walked along they sang sweet hymns, and when they wound up the little green lane and entered the church-yard, they were met by a missionary clergyman the children all loved very much. Then all assembled round the grave, and when the service had been read, and the little coffin put down, a few solemn, earnest words were spoken to the children, and they sang "Come to Jesus," and "Shall we ever meet again?" and the little ones went home, solemnly singing as they went. We felt very thankful that the first death should be such a happy one; we feel quite sure that little Nanny Slattery is in heaven.

Earth and Heaven.

Every morning the red sun
Rises warm and bright ;
But the evening cometh on,
And the dark, cold night.
There's a bright land far away,
Where 'tis everlasting day.

Every Spring the sweet young flowers
Open fresh and gay,
Till the chilly Autumn hours
Wither them away.
There's a land we have not seen,
Where the trees are always green.

Little birds sing songs of praise,
All the Summer long ;
But in colder, shorter days,
They forget their song.
There's a place where angels sing
Ceaseless praises to their King.

Christ the Lord is ever near
Those who follow Him ;
But we cannot see Him here,
For our eyes are dim.
There is a most happy place,
Where men always see His face.

Who shall go to that fair land ?
Those who love the right ;
Holy children there shall stand,
In their robes of white :
For that heaven so bright and blest
Is our everlasting rest. —Selected.

CHAPTER V.

"AND ABRAHAM CALLED THE NAME OF THAT PLACE JEH-
HOVAH-JIREH."—Gen. xxii. 14.

FOR some time money had come in pretty well for "The Birds' Nest." but as the number of children increased it became difficult to get enough, and sometimes our faith began to fail, but we knew we were in the right path, and so we felt that God would sometime give us a blessing. However, it was necessary to work, and in the month of July we had a sale of work in the open air. Some pretty gardens were lent to us, and we got three tents erected, in two of which we displayed our wares, the other was for the band to make music. We thought it would be nice to have the children there, that friends might see them, so they came dressed in their blue frocks and white pinafores, the boys in blue pinafores and straw hats. When they entered the gardens the

soldiers stopped playing their music ; and a clergyman who was there, took the smallest Birdie by the hand, and led the troop round the tent, singing as they went. All business ceased. It was so very touching to see the little helpless things ; and one could not help feeling so very grateful that they had been rescued from misery to be trained up for glory. Afterwards, they went into a tent and sang hymn after hymn ; and when we thought they must be tired, they said with one voice, " No, no ; we could sing all night."

By that Bazaar we got about £70 for the Nest : it was a great help.

Towards the close of the year, as there was a great difficulty about beginning the new building, we thought we ought not to keep so many poor children waiting, as God was sending money ; so we determined to leave the little cottage, and take a larger house ; this was done, and by the end of the year there were sixty-four inmates. The new comers easily fell into the orderly ways of those who had been trained to good habits, and so there was little difficulty ; and as time went on we were induced to increase the number to eighty-

one. In every available spot of the house were the little beds laid down, and the assembly at meals was a goodly sight to behold. Down the centre of the room was a long table, occupied by the elder boys and girls, and round by the walls were high forms for tables, and low forms for seats for the little ones, and yet there was the greatest order amongst them; and as they, with clasped hands, stood to sing their grace, and then quietly ate their food, you would have supposed that they had been carefully taught, even from their babyhood.

Still we had many difficulties in this crowded house; no baths, no convenience at all for washing either the children or their clothes, a few tubs in the yard being all we could manage, and we were very anxious that the new building should be commenced as soon as possible.

In April, 1861, a piece of ground was procured. It was a green field nearly opposite the house the children occupied. Just then the Rev. Alexander Dallas, who has been so blessed by God in the conversion of Roman Catholics, was coming over from England, and we asked him to lay the foundation-stone; he gladly consented.

The day appointed was the 11th of April. It was a most lovely day, and the friends who went down to Kingstown from Dublin almost filled a train. When we arrived, we walked first up to the old Nest, where the children were all assembled, dressed in their new summer livery. When Mr. Dallas came into the playground, they all gathered round him and sang a welcome. He spoke a few words to them, after which, all formed into a procession and walked down the road to the ground selected for the new building.

The children took their places around the stone, and then all the other people stood around. The Rector of the parish offered up a prayer for God's blessing, and then the stone was put down. Some nice speeches were made, and then the children gathered into a group and sang many beautiful hymns, their voices blending so sweetly together. We all felt full of joy and thankfulness, and joined in heart and feeling in the children's chorus, "All glory to Jesus."

After this the Building Committee worked in earnest. We will leave them at their work for a year, and continue the history of "The Birds' Nest."

In every large family there are troubles, and it would have been very foolish to expect that there would be *none* in our great family at "The Birds' Nest." But as time passed on, the bright days were more numerous than the cloudy ones ; there was more joy than sorrow connected with it. In the summer of 1861, we had our trials—great dark, black clouds came gathering over, but they broke "in blessings on our heads."

In the month of May we had no money ; positively not a penny to buy the daily bread for the children. A friend lent £80 to go on with, but this had to be paid up, and we did not know what to do. In this strait a few little children met for prayer ; they prayed that this money might be sent. On the next day a gentleman called and left £10. The children thanked God, and prayed yet again. Two ladies called and left £20. Again they met ; they just asked in a simple way for the £50 yet wanting. That was Sunday. On the Wednesday a lady called upon their mamma, and asked if the needed money had come in. Finding it was not, she took from her purse a fifty-pound note. "Don't mention my

name," she said. "It is the Lord sends it to you."

Ah yes! *we* knew very well how it had come, and *why*. Does not our Father in heaven say, "Call upon ME in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shall glorify me." Now we had the £80 to pay our debt, and we could go comfortably on.

About the time we were in this distress a very remarkable circumstance occurred. I was down at the Nest one day, and the matron said she was in great need of under-garments for the girls. I told her I had none for her, and that, now there was no money, I could not buy any material. She said she did not know what to do, for she had patched up all the old ones, and could only make out one a piece. She very much wanted one new one each, that would be five dozens. "Very well," I said, "we must ask God that this need may be supplied." I went home. In my absence two parcels of clothing had arrived from England, gifts for the Nest. I opened one, and found four dozens and four of the very article I wanted; and nothing else. The parcel was accompanied by a letter apologizing for the

articles being all of one sort, as the young people who had made them could make nothing else. Great was my astonishment and joy. I made up the number from the other parcel, and went straight back to the Nest, and told the children how God had supplied their wants. Tears stood in many eyes as they listened, and they learned a lesson of trust in God they will not soon forget. It is wonderful to see how God was preparing the answer before the want came. All the time those little children were putting in stitch after stitch, they were working out the will of God ; and just when the need came, the work was ready. It is written, "Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear."

During this year of 1861, one of the first inmates lay ill of consumption. Her life and death formed the subject of a little book, entitled "Not Alone," which we wrote while all the sweet things she said were fresh in our memories. We will insert it amongst these records of the Birds' Nest, as it is there written:—

CHAPTER VI.



"NOT ALONE."

THIS little story is for the lambs in the flocks; and it is written that they may know more of the Good Shepherd's leadings, that they may learn to be diligent "followers of them who through faith and *patience* inherit the promises."

I think if you had seen little Emily, when she was first brought to the Ragged School, you would have said, "What a *nice* little girl! I should just like to make clothes for her, and buy her some shoes, and take care of her." And yet her mother, who brought her, said that she was a very *wicked* little girl, that she was disobedient, that she told *lies*, and that she could not keep her any longer in her house. The ladies of the committee did not

know how to believe this story; and one of them said to Emily, "Is it true that you are such a naughty little girl?" She smiled very sweetly, and said, "I try not to be, ma'am."

"And if we take you into our dormitory, will you try to be obedient?" "Oh! yes, ma'am; please take me." And when she was told she should stay for a month, such a look of joy came into her face, that the ladies felt *quite* sure the story was untrue.

And so it was. Emily had always tried to be a good child at home, although she was a Roman-catholic, and did not know the true motives for obedience, and her mother was very fond of her. But by some means she got a New Testament, and when she read this, she found how wrong the Roman-catholic religion is, and she refused to follow it. Then her mother turned against her, and she made up the story of Emily's wickedness, in order to make people think she was right in turning her out of the house.

Poor child! she had now no *home* on earth, but Jesus was preparing for her a home in heaven; and because He wanted to make her ready for *that* home, He led her young foot-

steps as once He led Abraham, saying. "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy *father's* house, unto a land which I will show thee."

Abraham went out that he might "receive the promises," and so did Emily ; for when she came to the Ragged School she had only head knowledge. She herself afterwards said, "I did not love Jesus when I first went there ; I only had Him in my head ; but He was not in my heart. I did not get Him into my heart till I was there three weeks, and then I only began to love Him a *little*."

Long before the month was out, Emily had endeared herself to her school-fellows and her teachers, but she was too young and small to stay in the dormitory for great girls ; so as soon as "The Birds' Nest" was opened at Kingstown, she was sent there. We hoped, too, that the air of the country would do her good, for she was not at all strong ; her face was pale, and there was a bright red spot in the middle of each cheek.

At Kingstown she was quite a "mother-bird," loving and kind to the little ones, tenderly caring for them, helping them in their

plays, and comforting them in their sorrows. Everybody loved Emily, except her unnatural relatives.

Pleasant footsteps were these ! The Good Shepherd was leading His little lamb in "green pastures beside the still waters," and she grew in grace and in likeness to the Saviour.

But there are rough places as well as smooth in the road to heaven ; it is "through much tribulation that we enter the kingdom ;" and the true follower of Jesus, although she be but a little child, will say—

"I'll welcome still the heaviest grief,
That brings me near to Thee."

Severe pain in her leg, accompanied by low fever, soon obliged Emily to find a new home in an hospital.

Here she was laid in a small bed, in a ward in which there were many other beds, and many patients came and went, some cured of their diseases, and some called to another world. But with Emily, month after month passed away with little change, except that she grew weaker, and the two red spots in her cheeks grew brighter, and the great pain of

her leg obliged her to lie in one position through the weary nights and days.

Her little Bible lay under her pillow ; but at first she did not know how much consolation it would give her in her pain. One night she was lying awake, suffering very much, and she thought, " I know the Bible comforts many people ; sure there must be enough in it to comfort me." It was too dark to read it then, so she went over in her mind some of the texts she had learned, and she soon found what she needed :—" Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth," and " I will make all thy bed in thy sickness." " These," she said, " I repeated over and over again, and they *did* comfort me so."

Sometimes she had to go through painful operations. When speaking of these, she said, " I never could have borne them if I had not known Jesus ; but His arms were always around me,"

Rough paths, indeed, were these to walk in, but the marks of the Saviour's footsteps were there ; they lay thick and close ; and Emily stepped into them.

Her heart was moved for the miseries of

those around her; she thought of their darkness and ignorance; she knew that many of them were as she once was, ignorant of the only true source of comfort, and she prayed that God would enable her to speak to some of them, and lead them to Jesus.

Lying in the next bed was a poor woman, and with her Emily commenced her missionary work. She repeated over and over, texts of Scripture, until the dull ear of the poor woman took them in, and God opened her heart to receive them. Then Emily would talk to her in her own sweet way, telling her of the love of Jesus, and how He casts out *none* that come to Him. The poor woman came to Jesus; and though she left that hospital, she was not long afterwards an inmate of another, where she died rejoicing in Christ as her Saviour. When the dear child was told of this, she did not show any surprise; it was what she had^d asked of God, and He had answered her prayer; and when one expressed astonishment that so much should have been learned in so short a time, Emily said it was no wonder, because the poor woman had been taught by the Holy Spirit.

During this long winter in the hospital,

Emily endeared herself to all about her, although the false story of her "*wickedness*" had been told to all the nurses, in order that they might help in the cruel work of persecution. But no one minded these wicked stories, because they all saw by her life what she was.

As spring came on, it was thought good that Emily should spend a short time in the country, and her kind doctor provided the means. A lodging was procured for her at Kingstown with a Christian family, and it was with great joy she removed there. For a little time she was able to sit out in the small garden, and enjoy the sunshine and the songs of the birds ; and it was so pleasant to sit beside her, and hear her talk of heaven. She had a great store of hymns, and used to repeat them when they would express her feelings better than her own words. She was very thankful that she had learned by heart so many hymns and texts, but it often troubled her that she could not easily find the places of the texts she loved. A great many she *could* find, because in the Mission Schools, all the children learn the *place* when they learn the *verse* ; but many a text she had heard had sunk into her heart,

and she longed to find these. She would often have quite a store of them in her mind, waiting till some of her loved friends should come in ; then she would say, " Please find some texts for me." One day she asked for three most beautiful ones: " The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms ; " " His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me ; " " For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain,"

A lady who often visited Emily writes the following:—" One day in September, I found her sitting in the garden outside the cottage, and her face brightened up so sweetly when I said, ' I have come to stay a long time with you to-day. Shall I read to you?' ' Oh ! please do,' she quickly replied. ' Is there any passage you would particularly wish?' ' No ; only something about Jesus.' I chose some verses in the seventh chapter of the Revelation, about the happy ones arrayed in white robes, and then I read that nice hymn—

" ' Oh ! cheer thee, cheer thee, suffering saint.'

The fourth verse she liked very much—



"Surely they of many blessings, should scatter blessings round.
As the autumn boughs when laden, cast their fruit upon the ground."

(n 44)



“ ‘Yes *He will* cheer thee, He will prove
The soul, encircled by His love,
Can meekly, ’midst its anguish, say—
“Still will I trust Him, though He slay;”
And He will make His words thine own,
Father, *Thy* will, not *mine*, be done.’

‘Yes,’ she said, ‘that is what I try to do.’”

Thus was dear Emily following Jesus; and oh! how He comforted her! Often, in the still hours of the night, she felt that Jesus was near, and that she was “not alone.” Sometimes she longed for the time when Jesus would take her to Himself; “But,” she said, “I try to have no will about it; whatever my Heavenly Father sees to be best for me, I shall like.”

As winter came on, Emily grew worse; and by-and-bye she was not able to leave her bed.

One Sunday in October, her kind friend visited her. She was suffering extremely, another abscess having formed, and the poor dear child was too weak to get up, and yet was suffering too much to allow her to lie down. Her poor pale face brightened up, as it always did on seeing those she loved, and she smiled so sweetly and gratefully at having her

back propped up with pillows. Her first words were, "I am so weary, so very weary, I cannot get up, and I cannot lie down, I am *so* weary."

"Well, dear, there is *rest* at home; there is no pain there, but only joy and peace. Would you like, Emily dear, to go home?" Her eyes beamed with such delight as she said, "Oh! indeed, *indeed* I would."

After speaking to her for some time longer about home, and the joy of seeing Jesus face to face, and being for *ever* in our Father's house, she said, "But don't you think that I shall enjoy heaven more than you? it will be such *rest*. Oh! I love to think of the *rest*; it is no *nice*—is it not?"

Speaking on the same subject to another friend, she said, "If we were at school, how glad we would be when the holidays drew near, and the time came for us to go home. And how glad *I* shall be when the call comes for me to go HOME. When people are in a ship, and when it has been very stormy, they enjoy reaching the harbour far more than when they have had a good passage, so I do be often thinking that I shall enjoy heaven

much more than those who never had any pain."

Poor Emily! it was no wonder she longed for home and *rest*—her's was indeed a stormy passage; but the bright light of heaven streamed on the waters, and this light brightened up the common things of life, and she saw all things in the light of God. One day a friend brought her some fruit; she said, "What beautiful fruit! how it reminds me of the fruit that grows on the tree of life, in the midst of the paradise of God, which He will give me to eat of." Another day, some time after, a friend brought her a bit of hawthorn, on which the leaves were bursting out in their fresh spring green; she looked at it, and said, "Isn't it like as if God's smiles were coming down to us?"

During one night in November she was much worse than usual. Towards morning she said to the kind friends with whom she lodged, "I thought a while ago that I was dying, and that the Lord Jesus Christ stood by my bedside, smiling at me, and He told me not to fear, that I would be with Him before long. I should like to see Mrs. S——,

my more than mother; but if I die before I can see her, I shall be one of the number that will come to meet her when she is leaving the world. Give my love to her, and to Mr. Eade, and Mr. MacCarthy, and tell them that I will love them all throughout eternity."

Soon after this, it was thought desirable that Emily should be brought again to the hospital, that she might be under the care of the doctors.

She could not bear the thoughts of this. "*I cannot go,*" she said to her friend; "I would rather die here." But a few words were enough to recall her to herself, and she whispered, "Pray that I may be ready for God's will in *all* things." Was she not even here following Jesus? Did not He, in prospect of suffering alone, say, "If it be *possible* let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as *Thou wilt*?"

When the day came for Emily to go, she called Mrs. F—, who had nursed her tenderly, to her, and putting her poor wasted arms round her neck, said, "God be with you! We part but for a little season, then we shall meet again round the 'great white throne,' *never* to part again."

The journey of seven miles into town was a very trying one to poor Emily, but God supported her, and she spoke of Jesus as if He were present with them. She handed her little Bible to Mr. F——, and asked him to read the 14th chapter of John, about the mansions prepared. When he got to the end of the fourth verse he stopped—tears were rolling down her poor little face. She said aloud, “Yes, Lord, You have prepared a place for me, and You have a crown of glory to give me the moment my soul leaves this poor body. Oh ! that You would convert my father and my mother, that they also might be with me in that place that God has prepared for those that love Him.”

The latter part of the journey the poor child was too weary to speak. At length they reached the hospital. It was very hard to part with one with whom she had spent so long a time, and to be left alone in a little solitary ward, under the care of a strange nurse. Yet even here she felt she was walking with Jesus.

It was Saturday evening when Emily was left in the hospital, and early on Monday, fearing she would be unhappy, I went to see her. She was lying calmly in her little bed, one of

her own sweet smiles brightening up her face. I said to her, "Do you feel lonely now you have left all your Kingstown friends?" "Not now," she said, "but when Mr. F—— left me, I cried myself sick. Then it came into my mind, 'Sure Jesus was once left alone ; didn't His disciples all leave Him ? and didn't He say, "Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me ?" Sure God is with me, too,' I said ; 'and I *did* get such comfort out of that ; and do you know, I haven't been a bit lonely since.'"

For more than three months Emily dwelt in this ward. They were happy and useful months. A great deal of suffering of body ; but Jesus spread a great calm over the spirit of the tried child, and she felt that all was well.

Emily was very anxious to be made useful to those around her, and spoke much to her nurse about coming to Christ.

A little before Christmas, a young woman was placed in the same ward, whom Emily soon discovered to be a Roman Catholic. To this young woman she longed to speak, but felt a great difficulty about it. She told me of this, and asked if I would pray that she might have an opportunity given to her.

A few days after Christmas, I went to see her. She took hold of my hand eagerly, and said, "Sit close, I want to whisper. We had such a happy Christmas Eve. I was well enough to sit up in a chair, and we had a good fire, and we had our tea ; and then I was longing so to talk to that poor girl, and asking God to teach me how to begin, and she began by saying, 'Emily, you ought to pray to the Lord to take you soon.' I asked why ; and she said, 'Because, don't you know, on Christmas Day, and for twelve days after, the gates of heaven stand wide open, night and day.' 'Yes,' I said, 'but not *only then*—the gates of heaven are *always* wide open, and Jesus wont turn away any who believe in Him.' 'I don't think you're right there,' she said. 'Believing is not enough. This is the way it is—we must do our best to make ourselves good, and then Jesus will take pity on us, and make up the rest.' I told her the story of the prodigal son ; how he had nothing but his misery and poverty to recommend him to his father, but how the father fell on his neck and kissed him. She liked the story very much, and said she did not know the Bible was such an interesting

book. I said it was full of such beautiful stories, and I would read some, if she liked. She was very glad. Then I sang for her, 'Just as I am,' and she liked it so much that she learned it. Oh ! it was such a happy evening."

That poor young woman went out of the hospital very soon after, and we do not know whether the seed thus sown has yet sprung up ; but we know that God has promised, that His word shall not be lost.

And now dear Emily seemed to be rapidly passing away. We visited her very often. One day one said to her, "I'll come again to-morrow." With a sweet smile, she said, "I may be at home to-morrow ; but we'll soon meet above, and oh ! won't I have a welcome for you there."

Another day, her wasted hand was lying outside her bed, and one said, "Poor little hand, how thin it is!" "Never mind," she said, "it will be fashioned like unto His glorious body."

On one of the last days of her life she sent a message to her former schoolfellows. She said, "Tell all who remember me to come to

Jesus ; tell them that, in my dying hour, He is more to me than all His promises. I am dying ; but, oh ! tell them all to come to Jesus."

Thus lived dear Emily ; and one morning, when we went to the hospital, she was gone. Her sweet face was not any whiter than usual, but there was the settled calm of death upon it. We thought of Enoch's translation, and we could say, " Emily walked with God, and she *is* not, for He has taken her."

And now, dear lambs of the flock, may God bless you, and give to each of you more and more of His Holy Spirit, that you may follow Emily as she followed Christ ; for " we desire that *every one* of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end." (Heb. vi. 11).

CHAPTER VII.

"THE LORD SHALL COMMAND THE BLESSING UPON THEE IN THY STOREHOUSES, AND IN ALL THAT THOU SETTEST THINE HAND UNTO."—Deut. xxviii. 8.

AND now we begin a new year, 1862. In the early part of it we had great anxieties about the sick children, so many chilblained feet, sore heads, and such things. We often longed for the fine weather to come, and the new house to be opened. But winter has its joys as well as sorrows. There was a decorated school-room and a Christmas-tree, with plenty of tea and cake provided by a kind friend, to welcome in the new year; and almost all were able to be present. And then there were the long pleasant winter evenings, when a good fire was made up in the kitchen, and the girls sat round with their work, the boys with their slates and pencils, and all the

little ones on the floor in the middle, where the matron would sit amongst them, and play all kinds of little games. These were happy times for the Birdies ; they cared not for the howling winds and driving rain. Once it might have harmed them, when they wandered forlorn and weary ; but now they were safely sheltered from the winter's blast.

For the first four months of the year the children were still in the old house. It was situated on one side of a country road, in the outskirts of Kingstown.

A field very nearly opposite had been chosen as the site of the new building. I could not tell you *how* often the poor little Birdies looked out at their new "Nest," as stone after stone was laid, and the walls rose, and the window-places were left, and then the roof was put on. And then the carpenters came, and doors were put in, and windows were made ; and then the iron railings were put up in front, and the gates in their places. How they wondered what it would all be like inside !

At last April came, and Mr. Dallas was coming over ; and though all the inside things

were not ready, still the school-rooms were finished, and we determined to have an opening day, on the 10th of April, exactly a year from the time when we all stood in the green field, and the first stone was put down.

I must explain the plan of the building, or I fear you will not exactly understand all I shall have to tell you. You will see by the picture that there are two doors ; one has " Boys' " written over it, the other " Girls' . " This is to suit the day-schools. You remember, that at first, the Birds' Nest children went to the Mission School ; now the Mission School was to come to the Birds' Nest.

The large space between each entrance is divided into two rooms ; the one on the boys' end, is the infant school-room ; the other is the feeding-room. In this latter are nine deal tables, some of them very low, with small low forms for the little children ; others are higher for those who have longer legs. At one end of this room is a door which is opposite the kitchen door ; and all the way from the boiler in the kitchen, to the far end of the feeding-room, a railway is laid ; on it is a carriage like a table with four shelves. The plates of food

are put upon these shelves, and with a push from a child's hand, off goes the carriage into the room, stopping at each table to supply the children.

Over these two rooms are two others, separated by folding doors. One is the boys' school-room, the other the girls'. Over these again are two large sleeping-rooms.

At the end you will see there are several smaller rooms. On the girls' end there is first the kitchen, then two rooms for the matron, two for the teachers, and one reaching from back to front, which is intended for any children who may not be quite well.

At the other end are apartments for the master, and above, sleeping-rooms for the boys.

On the day of opening, the folding doors were opened, and the two large school-rooms formed *one* very large room, which was beautifully decorated with green leaves and paper flowers.

These, with the new school pictures and maps hanging upon the walls, gave it quite a bright, lively appearance ; and when the bright spring sun shone in at the windows, our hearts quite danced with joy. On one of the sides, half-way down the room, was a sort of plat-

form, on which the gentlemen who were to speak, might stand.

At two o'clock the children were all assembled in the yard of the old house, each neatly dressed. The girls had new straw bonnets, which had just been given to them by two kind friends. When Mr. Dallas appeared they set up a great shout, and then sang a welcome. Afterwards all formed into a procession, headed by Mr. Dallas with the very smallest child by the hand. So they walked through the house and across the road, and up the stairs of the new Nest, the wonder and curiosity of the children increasing more and more.

The large room was so full of people, who had come to the opening, that it was not very easy for the children to get in, in an orderly manner ; but people got out of the way, and before long the regiment of children in blue and white was nicely settled upon a temporary gallery which had been provided for them.

As we looked round upon that large meeting, our hearts were very full of thankfulness to God ; thankfulness, that so many poor children had been brought together to learn of Jesus, and thankfulness that so many friends

had been raised up to provide what was needful for those children; so we could sing with all our hearts,

“Crown *Him* Lord of all.”

Then there was an earnest prayer to God, that He would continue to pour out His blessing on the Institution, that every child coming in might be made *indeed* a child of God, and that the means may be raised, not only to feed and clothe the children, but also to pay for the nice new Home.

Then Mr. Dallas spoke; and he told about the Orphan Nurseries in Connemara, and how God had blessed them. He spoke particularly to the children who were present, telling them of the Children's Association, and inviting them to join them. He told about the kind friend, in whose memory the house had been built; about the praying children, and how prayer had been answered.

When Mr. Dallas had done speaking the children sang a very favourite hymn:—

“There is a better world they say,
Oh so bright!
Where sin and death are done away,
Oh so bright!

There music fills the balmy air,
And angels all so bright are there,
And harps of gold and mansions fair,
Oh so bright !

No clouds e'er pass along its sky,
Happy land !
No teardrops glisten in the eye,
Happy land !
They drink the gushing streams of grace,
They gaze upon the Saviour's face,
Whose glory fills the holy place,
Happy land !

And wicked things and beasts of prey,
Come not there !
And ruthless death and fierce decay,
Come not there !
There all are holy, all are good,
But hearts unwashed in Jesus' blood,
And guilty sinners unrenewed,
Come not there !

But though we're sinners every one,
Jesus died !
And though our crown of peace is gone,
Jesus died !
We may be cleansed from every stain,
May all be clothed with peace again,
And in that land of pleasure reign,
Jesus died !

This world is oft so dark and drear,
Take us there !
We ne'er can be so happy here,
Take us there !
Oh, listen to that music sweet,
It comes so rich from yonder seat,
Where all the saints in glory meet,
Take us there ! ”

This was a very suitable hymn, because it was about the happiness of those who were gone.

There were other speeches, and other hymns sung by the children. It was a very happy meeting.

After it was over, a good many children waited to get cards, so that we counted up ninety-four members in the Children's Association.

And now that the Nest was opened, we were very anxious that the workmen should make as much haste as possible, and get out, so that the children might come in. The matron's rooms were finished first, and she came in to get all into order. There were new bedsteads to be got, new little beds to be filled with straw, and sheets and blankets to be prepared ; and every day the elder girls came over to help to hem and stitch.

In about a fortnight the moving day came, and many little hands carried over bundle after bundle; and there was such excitement, such rushing over the house to see all the rooms, such peering into presses, as only children who have ever moved into a new house can understand.

It was not very easy to reduce all to order, as you may imagine. The new house required new plans, and new work; and the workmen kept themselves a very long time about doing little finishings. Just as we thought they were quite ready to go, a terrible misfortune happened—the well ran dry! and there was no water for that great house and its inmates. Many schemes were thought of, for water must be had. The only thing that could be done was to dig a very deep well. At last water was found, but we were obliged to have a steam-pump to get it up.

You cannot think what a time of trouble we had of it, all the long weeks when there was no water; we never before felt the comfort of the last part of the promise, “Bread shall be given, and *water* shall be *sure*.” During that time, we were glad when we heard the driving

rain; for we knew the cisterns were filling, and for a time the want would be supplied.

On the 30th of April we had a Children's Meeting at The Birds' Nest. Some clergymen who knew how to speak to children came.

At this Meeting the story of little Pat Daly was told. He was a child who would have been put into the Nest, only Jesus took him right away to heaven, before we had a place ready for him. As many will read this book who were not at that meeting, we must put in the story for them. It shows just the sort of little children for whom we have provided a home in "The Birds' Nest;" for though Pat had a mother, she had no work except a day's washing now and again. And very, very often there was no food in their home, and no fire; and the story will tell how little of comfort there was for the sick child. It is a story of the winter time without the Holly and Ivy.

CHAPTER VIII.

"HE SHALL GATHER THE LAMBS IN HIS ARMS, AND CARRY THEM IN HIS BOSOM."

WHEN the messengers of the Good Shepherd go out to seek those who are lost, they cannot see the marks by which Jesus knows which are His, and so they gather in all they can find; and they teach them about Him who loved them enough to die for them, and they try to win them into the upward path that leads to heaven.

Many of the children who are gathered into the earthly fold, never reach the heavenly; they love sin better than holiness, and the broad easy road that leads to death, better than the narrow difficult path that leads to life.

But many there are who learn to know the gentle voice of the Good Shepherd, and to follow Him.

About three years ago a Scripture Reader,

out on his daily rounds of visiting, entered a room in which there were two children, a girl and a boy.

The girl was about eight years old; she hung down her head and looked cross, and did not like to be spoken to. The little boy was about six; he had a noble forehead and deep blue eyes, and he gave very nice answers to the questions which were put to him. Both children looked miserably poor and dirty, and the room in which they lived was more miserable and dirty still.

Before the Reader left he had taught the little boy to repeat that nice little text you all know—"Suffer little children to come to me," and both of them had promised to attend the Ragged School in the Coombe.

With the girl it was *only* a promise, but Pat was soon one of the brightest little boys in the infant school. He liked all the lessons very much, but the texts and little hymns he loved more than all.

Pat had not been attending the school long, when a great persecution was raised against it. Every morning a large mob assembled in the street to try and keep the children from going

in. Many little children were carried off to strange schools in distant parts of the town, and left to find their way home as best they could; and many a poor mother was searching until late at night for her lost ones.

On one of these terrible days, little Pat was seized by a priest, who was carrying him away in his arms, when his missionary friend saw him, and, to the great joy of the little boy, rescued him.

That terrible time passed away, and again the smitten flock assembled in peace; and many were the prayers they offered up for their enemies, and many the thanksgivings that the Good Shepherd had so watched over them, and quieted the raging of the enemy.

We don't know why it is, but sometimes God sends very great trials to even little children. He knows best; and the roughest path is often the shortest, if it only lead right upwards.

Thus it was with this poor ragged boy; he had not been many weeks at school when his teachers noticed that he grew paler and thinner, and he complained of pain in his leg; then he had to sit all day, and he could not go

out to play with the other children; still he loved to come to school, and though he could not read, he learned a great many texts of Scripture, and a great many hymns, quite perfectly. His voice was very sweet and soft, and it was quite a pleasure to hear him sing.

But he grew worse and worse; and just as the winter was over, and the sun began to warm up the homes of the poor, Pat had to leave school and go to an hospital. His leg was so bad, that he had to lie many weeks quite still, suffering great pain; but he was so patient and gentle, that those around could not help loving him.

A good clergyman who visited the hospital, used often to talk with Pat about Jesus, and listen to him while he sang his hymns. One day he thought the little boy was dying, and he gathered the other children who were in the hospital about Pat's bed, that they might see how happy he was; and the children sang—

“I think when I read that sweet story of old.”

While they were singing, the little boy kept his eyes fixed earnestly on his mother. He was asked why he did so. He said solemnly,

“Because I think she does not know enough about the Lord Jesus.” He then asked her to read the Bible, and attend the school. “I don’t wish to stay any longer here,” he said, “I would rather go to the Lord Jesus; but, mother won’t you do as I asked you?”

Another day his mother was sitting beside him. He fixed his eyes upon her, and said solemnly, “Mother, I want you to go to heaven, won’t you give your heart to Jesus? Mother, pray to Jesus; trust in Jesus; He will bring you to heaven. Mother, *do* read God’s Book, and listen to Mr. S——; he’ll teach you. Oh! mother, I wish you would give your heart to Jesus; He would make you happy.”

He was told that a friend had been inquiring for him. He said, “Tell him that Pat says good-bye.”

But this was not to be Pat’s good-bye; he revived, and after six months’ stay in the hospital, was discharged as incurable.

Again he was an inmate of the wretched home in which the missionary first found him, and there it was that I first became acquainted with him.

It was a cold, snowy evening, in the early

part of January, and we had to walk very quickly through the narrow streets to keep ourselves warm. When we reached the house we had to mount three flights of winding stairs before we found the garret which was Pat's home. The door was standing a little open, and we entered without being seen.

It was, indeed, a desolate place ; a broken chair, an old form, and an iron pot turned upside down, was all the furniture. In one corner was a morsel of straw, covered with a bit of old carpet, which formed a bed. Although it was not more than enough for one child to lie on, it was the only resting-place for the whole family.

In another corner of the room was a fireplace with a few smouldering cinders in it ; and, close up to the grate, with his face nearly touching it, sat poor little Pat upon a small bundle of rags—a poor neglected child, his face as black as the cinders which surrounded him, his hair uncombed and uncared, and his clothes worn since they had been sent to him some weeks before, never even taken off.

When he saw us a look of joy passed over his poor little face, for he had often seen us in

the Ragged School, although we did not know him from amongst the other children. I said to him, "Would you not like to go to the hospital again?"

"No," he said; "I am going to a better place."

"And what is that place?"

"Heaven."

"Do you love Jesus?"

"Yes; He died for me."

"And what is Jesus doing for you now?"

"He is making intercession at the right hand of God."

"And where did you learn about Jesus and heaven?"

"In the Ragged School; I learnt it all there."

Ah! how many little children have been taken from that Coombe Ragged School to glory; and when they meet together in the Promised Land, they will join Pat in saying, "I learnt it all there."

We asked Pat why he thought God had sent him his sickness.

"Because of sin," he said. "I think he is angry with me."

We explained to him that it was sent in love, not in anger; for "whom the Lord loveth He

chasteneth." This satisfied him; he had great faith in the Saviour's love.

Before we came away, I showed the little boy a flannel waistcoat which I had brought for him; he stroked it with his little wasted fingers, and said, "Thank you; I shall be warm now." I felt very thankful to be permitted to join the angels in ministering to this heir of glory.

The next time I went to see the poor little boy, I found him lying on the bit of straw in the corner. I had brought with me a soft sponge, a towel, and a small piece of scented soap, which I thought would tempt him to wash; for he said before that it hurt him, and I'm sure it did, he was so very thin. He was quite delighted with the nice things, and ever afterwards was as clean as one could wish. I knelt down beside his bed to talk to him, for his voice was weak, and it was difficult to hear what he said. I asked him if he felt happy. "Yes, very," he said. "I'm going to heaven."

"And why do you like to go there?"

"Jesus is there."

"Why else?"

"There is no sin there."

"Why else?"

"There is no pain there."

"Why else?"

"Tears shall be all wiped away."

"How do you know that?"

"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

"What are you to Jesus?"

"I'm His little lamb."

"And what is Jesus to you?"

"He's my Good Shepherd."

"And what does the Good Shepherd do for His little lambs?"

"He takes them in His arms, and carries them in His bosom."

"Do you know what David said about the valley of the shadow of death?"

"Yes. 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.'"

"David was not afraid; but are you?"

"No; Jesus is with me; His rod and His staff comfort *me*. Oh, I should like to die to-morrow!"

It was quite wonderful to see the peace and happiness of this dear little child in the midst of his poverty, every little gift was received with

such thanks. One day a lady brought him an orange, the gift of her little nephew. "What message will you send him?" she asked.

"Tell him," he said, "I wish him to be as happy as I am."

He was asked what he did when the great pain came on. "I ask Jesus to give me patience," he said, "and then I can bear it."


Only once I heard of his being at all impatient. It was Sunday morning, and the bells were ringing, and he thought of the many happy Sundays that he had spent at the Ragged School, and he longed so much to go again, that tears rolled down his cheeks. Then his mother took him in her arms to the window, that he might see the people go by, and this amused him a little.

It was a great trial to him that his mother could not enter into his feelings. She was a Roman-catholic, and did not at all understand how any one could be happy in the thought of death. Pat tried to teach her that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin;" but she would not learn the lesson; only when he sang his hymns for her she listened; perhaps even yet the Holy Spirit may make her remember his

words, and she may learn to give up every false hope, and rest alone on Jesus.

One day some little girls went to see poor little Pat. One of them brought some bonbons, which had been given to herself; another, a toy. He was greatly pleased with these things, and he repeated some hymns for them, and he told them where he was going, and how happy he expected to be in heaven. He said that Jesus had a harp, and crown, and a white robe, waiting for him. One of the little girls could hardly help crying when she saw how thin Pat was; but they were both very happy to think that he would soon be where there will be no more pain.

It was quite wonderful how much knowledge of God's Word Pat had, though he could not read. In the Mission Schools they have a little paper, with one hundred texts marked upon it, for the children to learn. This little boy could repeat all of these, and besides, his memory was full of Bible lessons, from histories and parables which he had been taught. He always kept his Testament under his pillow, that any one who visited him might read for him.



The clergyman to whom Pat sent his "good-bye" from the hospital, went to see him, and talked a long time with him. Before he went away he asked what he should pray for. The little boy mentioned three things. "Patience to bear pain; to take it away; and that I may not be afraid when I come to the valley of the shadow of death." This last prayer was wonderfully answered.

About the middle of the day, on Thursday, the 1st of March, I received a message that Pat was dying. I went as quickly as possible. When I reached the room, the door was a little open; I went quietly in. Dear little Pat was lying with his arms stretched out, his eyes fixed and glazed; his mother knelt on the floor, watching him. "Ah, ma'am, he's almost gone!" she said. I knelt beside her, hoping to catch a last smile, but the breathing had ceased. Pat was singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

That morning, when he woke up, he put his two little wasted arms round his mother's neck, and kissed her many times. She said, "Did you sleep well, my darling?" "Yes, mamma, quite well," said he; but his voice was changed.

She struck a light, and then she saw that his face too was changed, and she knew he was dying. She sent for their missionary friend. When he came the child could not speak, but he drew from under his pillow his little Testament, and listened earnestly to the story of the death of Lazarus. He knew he was dying, but his prayer was answered, he had no fear in "the valley of the shadow of death."

On the Saturday before, he appeared much stronger than usual, and sang many of his favourite hymns—"Here's a message of love;" "I think, when I read;" and "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild." Of this last he was particularly fond. He sang it all through. When he had sung the lines—

"In the kingdom of thy grace,
Grant a little child a place,"

he said, "A happy, happy place for ME."

As I heard this, gazing at the wasted form of the little boy, I tried to think of the wondrous change from that body of pain, and miserable garret, to the happy, happy place in the bosom of Jesus, in the midst of the glories which eye hath not seen; but, oh; we could

not realize *that*—we can only say, “Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

No stone marks the spot where Pat's little body lies, but the Good Shepherd knows it, and He will watch over it until the resurrection morning, when the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised, and we shall *ever* be with the Lord.

When all the speeches had been made, the children of “The Birds' Nest” came up into the room and stood together in a group, and sang some of their nice hymns, and then he asked if any of the children present would like to take cards to collect. This question was very full of interest to us. I will tell you why. A few days before the meeting, we had held one of our little prayer-meetings, and we had asked for a special blessing on this children's meeting, and one little boy had prayed very earnestly that we might get fifty new collectors. You see we were watching for an answer to this prayer.

The cards were given out in different parts of the room by a clergyman and the secretary. They each took the names of the new collec-

tors, and when they were counted up, we were almost surprised, and very much delighted, to find there were exactly fifty new members for the Children's Association.

Little ones like me.

"Jesus, when he left the sky,
And for sinners came to die,
In his mercy passed not by
Little ones like me.

Mothers then, as mothers ought,
In the places where He taught,
Unto Him their children brought,
Little ones like me.

Did the Saviour say then, nay?
No! He kindly bid them stay,
Suffered none to turn away,
Little ones like me.

When into Jerusalem,
Meekly riding Jesus came,
Children hailed His blessed name,
Little ones like me.

In the glorious heaven above,
Through the gracious Saviour's love,
Children bliss and glory prove,
Little ones like me.

'Twas for them His life he gave,
To redeem them from the grave,
Jesus died from hell to save,
Little ones like me.

Children, then, should love Him now,
Strive His Holy will to do,
Pray to Him, and praise Him too,
Little ones like me."

CHAPTER IX.

"There are many little children now
In heaven, with harps of gold,
And harps on earth so beautiful,
You never can behold ;
And these little children play their harps
So tenderly and sweet,
That the angels love to listen
As they bow at Jesus' feet."

WHILE all these things were going on, two dear children were absent, ill in the hospital. We take the poor children from their misery, and we try to shelter them from danger and harm, and bring them up for Jesus. And then, sometimes the Good Shepherd Himself comes and takes them in His own arms, and blesses them, and He makes them ready to go up higher.

"For the Father's fold, it is warm and bright,
O'er-flowing with love, and the door
Is open to all of the little ones,
For ever and evermore."

And then these happy ones,

“’Scaping the storms of this weary life,
’Scaping the dust and the heat,
Fly up through the great golden archway to
God,
To nestle for aye at His feet.”

One of these two was a dear girl named Hannah. She early learned to trust in Jesus; and before she went to the hospital felt and *knew* that her sins were forgiven. And through those four weary months, when she knew she was to die, her soul was kept resting in Jesus. She was often able to be up, and then she would sit beside the little beds in the children’s ward, and teach the little ones texts of Scripture and sweet hymns. She was much beloved amongst them all. She did not die in the hospital, but just a week after she had left it. She was happy to the last; her faith endured to the end; and she left behind her a testimony to the faithfulness of Jesus.

The other was quite a little child, about ten years of age. About three years before, she had been brought to the Ragged School by a clergyman. He said she had no one to take care of

her; and as soon as there was room, she was admitted into "The Birds' Nest."

She was a quiet, serious child, naturally of an amiable disposition, and gave very little trouble.

She studied the Bible earnestly, and so learned the true motive for obedience. We could not tell exactly when she became one of Christ's followers. It was like sunshine on a misty morning; the light dawns and spreads about, but you cannot tell exactly when the sun rises. But before noon the mist clears away, and then there can be no mistake about the sunshine. Thus it was with Janey. It was only morning time with her when she was laid upon a bed of sickness, but then there was no mistaking about the clear shining of the Sun of Righteousness. Many a long day she lay calmly and patiently on her little bed in the hospital.

One day when I went to see her, she repeated for me a little hymn :—

"Jesus, only He can give
Peace and comfort while we live;
Jesus, only can supply
Boldness, if we're called to die."

She repeated the words as if they came from her heart; and when I talked to her about it, I felt quite sure that she was enjoying that peace.

We had bought her a nice doll and a little Testament. We gave her the doll first, and she looked admiringly at it; then we showed her the Testament. Instantly the doll was laid down, and with both hands she grasped the Testament; she had been longing so for it, because her Bible was too heavy for her to hold up.

It did not seem to be any trouble to Janey that she had no relatives. She had Jesus; that was enough; and He supported her to the end.

For five months dear little Janey lay in that hospital, suffering very much, but patiently "waiting for Jesus;" her calmness and peace reminded me of the words of a beautiful hymn.

"One of Jesus' lambs am I,
Near His side to keep I try,
Near my Shepherd, loving, tender,
Careful Guide, and strong Defender,
Whose protection I can claim,
And who calls me by my name.

Often in the cooling shade
I am gladly by Him stayed,
Then in pastures green He leads me,
Out of His own hands He feeds me,
For my thirst still water gives ;
He who drinks for ever lives.

Should I not then happy be,
Since He takes such care of me ?
And when these bright days are ended,
By good angels then attended,
In His arms He'll take me home,
Never forth again to roam."

Oh, yes! Janey is now no more a helpless wanderer, but safe at home with Jesus, in the land where the inhabitants are never sick.

Very soon after these two died, three little boys were removed to the hospital with fever; we could not visit them because of the infection; but they all died, giving to those who saw them testimony that they were lambs of the Good Shepherd's fold. We look upon it as a great mercy that we have a good evidence concerning all who are gone. It is dreadful for a child to die unprepared, to think of the outer darkness into which those are cast who *will not* come to Christ that they might have life.

Oh, dear children, you who are members of the Children's Association, what if you were like Noah's carpenters, helping in the work of saving others, and perishing yourselves! Oh! may God keep you from this doom; may He *early* number you *amongst His children*.

CHAPTER X.

"YE HAVE THE POOR WITH YOU ALWAYS, AND WHENSOEVER YE WILL, YE MAY DO THEM GOOD."—Mark, xiv. 7.

WINTER and Spring passed away, and the bright summer time came, and we had our bazaar. The little children came as usual and walked about in the gardens, and the soldiers played music. These soldiers were in the habit of going down to Kingstown to play music for the grand ladies and gentlemen who walk upon the pier, but they never there had such attentive listeners as the troop of one hundred and fifty boys and girls, who now gathered round them, and marched to their time. After one piece was done a young soldier took a little boy in his arms, and began to talk to him. "What is your name?" he asked.

"Mickey—Mickey L——."

"What! where did you live before you came here?"

"I lived with my mother up in the Coombe till she died."

The young soldier started. He enquired further, and found Mickey was his own little brother ; he himself had run away from his mother, and had not since heard of her ; he overwhelmed the little fellow with kisses and cakes ; and, early the next morning, went to the Nest to wish him good-bye : he was going off to Canada with his regiment.

During summer time the children take long walks, and they enjoy this very much. Often they get down to the sea-side and bathe. The boys are learning to swim. They have a great friend, a pensioner, who is a true-hearted Christian man, and he frequently takes the boys after school hours and shows them how to make fishing-tackle, small boats, and all such things. This is a great joy to them. They are so grateful to him. We do everything we can to make these poor children happy. I think Jesus would have us do this. He tells us to "do them good;" and this we try to do by spreading around them as much of joy as we can ; and we have our reward in the gratitude and affection they show. The

members of the Children's Association have done much of this happy work.

In the month of October we thought we would have a new kind of tea-party at the Nest. The members of the Association who lived about Kingstown were each asked to subscribe a shilling, and come to the Nest on the 13th. With the shillings, cake, bread and butter, and tea were provided. The dining-room was decorated, and the tables laid out. For every six cups and saucers there was a small tea-pot, sugar-bowl, and milk-jug. Our plan was for each collector to be a tea-maker, and sit down at the table. At four o'clock the Nest children were all assembled on the gallery of the Infants' School, and then our visitors arrived. While tea was preparing in the next room, there was an examination, and some singing. This did not last very long, for the great boilers did their work very quickly, and tea was ready. In a wonderfully short time the troop of Nestlings were settled around the tea-tables, and the little girls, all impatient to begin their work, sat down to the tea-pots. But hush ! there is perfect silence ; all eyes are closed, all hands folded together,

and now a full chorus of children's voices is heard:—

“Be present at our table, Lord,
Be here and everywhere adored,
These mercies bless, and grant that we
May feast in Paradise with Thee.”

Three times a day they sing these words, and the voice of even the youngest joins,—it is very beautiful.

I don't think there ever was such a happy tea-party as this given to, and enjoyed by the children. After it was over, we had an exhibition of a magic lantern. Many of the poor children had never seen one before, and their joy was very great.

You see we have some days of *great* joy, we have also times of sorrow. Not long after this tea-party, measles broke out in the Nest, and before very long forty-three children lay ill.

As they sickened one after another, they were taken up-stairs and put to bed. We engaged nurses to take care of them, and a kind doctor attended them every day: we were very anxious about them, but they all got on well, except one little boy, who was removed to

hospital with another disease, of which he died. He was a dear child of nine years of age; he had only been six weeks in the Nest, but had crept into the heart of teachers and school-fellows. He died trusting in Jesus.

During this time of sickness we felt very thankful that so many dear children could be comforted in the Nest—where would they have been without it—none to care for them? One dear child was very ill. I asked her had she any friend we could write to?

“I hav’nt got none,” she said; “only Mrs. S——” (one of the Committee).

“And where did she get you?” I asked.

“In the Ragged School.”

Poor child, where would she have been now if there were no “Birds’ Nest”?

Well, this time of trial passed, and Christmas time was arriving, and the Nestlings were all looking forward to it with joy. No, not *quite* all. One dear little girl was lying ill in the hospital; she never expected to go back again; and we knew she must die. But I think I must just go back a little and tell you her history.


CHAPTER XI.

“Ye must not, when beneath the cloud, forget
That He—whose love is sunshine—loves you yet.”

MARY and Bobby were the children of a kind mother, but a drunken father. They used to attend a Ragged School with two little sisters. They were very wretched, naked, hungry children. We pitied them very much, and sometimes gave them a bib or a petticoat, but it never appeared the second time—the wretched father sold it for drink! He did not care what his little children suffered, and so through the long winter they came hungry and barefooted to school.

The poor mother was very unhappy, and she tried to think what she could do to comfort her little ones.

She determined to go to service, and pay some woman to mind her children; but she found her wages would only pay for two; still



she thought it better to do that than all starve together.

She took the two little girls and put them to lodge with a clean, tidy woman, and told her husband he must mind Mary and Bobby. He said he would, and the mother went to a place in the country.

There was very soon a great improvement in the appearance of the two little girls, but poor Mary and Bobby grew more and more worn and miserable.

Their case was brought before the Committee of The Birds' Nest. They agreed to receive them, and a message was sent to the lady who had applied for them.

That very day, at three o'clock, Mary and Bobby went to their wretched home from school. The woman, with whom their father had placed them, met them at the door, and told them they should not come there any more, that their father had not been heard of for two days.

With aching hearts and tearful eyes they turned from the door; they thought they would go to the woman who minded their sisters—perhaps she would have compassion on them. But

no: "I have children of my own," she said; "and your mother can only pay for two."

Poor Mary and Bobby, what will they do now? They thought of their Father in heaven, and they knelt down and asked Him to take care of them. When they rose from their knees, it came into Mary's mind to go to the house of a lady they had seen at the school, and tell her their troubles. It was a very cold evening in January, half-melted snow lay in the streets, and rain and hail came driving down, but the poor children struggled on with their bare heads and naked feet. Their hearts nearly failed them as they went up the hall-door steps; but Bobby seized the bell and gave it one sudden pull, and it rang, and the servant came to the door; his mistress was out, but he had a kind and tender heart; he listened to the tale of sorrow, and took them to wait in the hall.

It happened that the lady's business out on that winter evening had been to seek for these very children, and she had been unable to find where they lived. Great was her surprise when she came in to find them in her own hall. They began to tell their story, but

she soon told them the good news that they were to go to The Birds' Nest. Oh, how glad they were! Little Mary dried up her tears, and Bobby looked at his bleeding feet, and then into the lady's face, and said, "Please sal me have sues dere?"

Before many minutes the children were standing before the kitchen fire, warming their frozen limbs; and then there was such washing and combing, and fitting on of nice comfortable clothes, and that very night they lay down to sleep in the happy Birds' Nest.

Mary never quite got over her sorrows. She was very delicate, and talked very little. She was rather downcast, perhaps a little shy. During the autumn of 1862 her health grew worse, and early in November she was removed to the Adelaide Hospital. It was soon known that her illness was a fatal one, and we felt very anxious about her soul.

One day when I visited her, I asked her would she be afraid if Jesus called her?

She fixed upon me an earnest gaze. "I'd be very much afraid," she said; "I don't think I belong to Him at all."

I spoke to her of His death upon the cross,

and how the way is open to all who will only believe.

She sighed deeply. "I know all that," she said; "but I am not one of the saved ones."

Many times we talked to her, but the same melancholy look was on her face; we prayed very earnestly that Jesus would give to her the Holy Spirit, that she might be enabled to trust and not be afraid.

At length, one Tuesday, it was the 9th of December, I went into the ward, and was delighted to see a bright smile on the face of my little friend. "I'm happy now," she said, "I know I'll go to heaven." And then, when I questioned her, she said, she *felt* her sins were laid on Jesus. Oh! how my heart rejoiced with her! A few days after, when I again visited the hospital, the nurse said to me, "There's such a change in Mary Jane; she has given up fretting." To be sure she had. She had found peace in Jesus; why should she fret? and there, hung up before her, was one of those "Silent Comforters," with a hymn turned down little Mary had learned to love. It begins—

“ A mind at *perfect peace* with God :
Oh ! what a word is this ?
A sinner reconciled through blood,
This, this indeed is peace.”

And then the last verse—

“ Why should I ever careful be
Since such a God is mine ?
He watches o’er me night and day,
And tells me mine is thine.”

So for one fortnight Mary Jane lay calmly waiting for Jesus; but she did not expect to be called very soon. On Wednesday, the 24th of December, when the doctor was with her she looked very earnestly at him. When he was gone, she said to the nurse, “ Nurse, I’m going to die.”

“ How do you know that ?” said the nurse.

“ Because when the doctor looked at me he shook his head. I know I’m going to die; and oh, nurse, *I’m not ready.*”

She was indeed dying, and the tempter was near to trouble her.

A thick cloud came over the child’s faith; she could not see Jesus. The nurse called up Mrs. R—— to talk to her. She spoke of

Jesus; His everlasting love, and how He *never* leaves nor forsakes His own little ones. But Mary Jane could not find peace.

A little while after Mrs. R—— was gone, as the child was lying quietly thinking and praying, the cloud passed away, and she called out in quite a strong voice, "Nurse, I'm happy; I've found Christ again; I can sleep now, nurse;" and with a peaceful smile she turned her head and slept sweetly and quietly. She was getting very near the waters of Jordan; but there was no fear—Jesus was with her.

As night came on she woke up and begged of the nurse to lie down.

"You must not stay on your feet for me," she said; "do go to bed." So she had to go for a little while to pacify the child; but she soon came back; she could not stay away.

As the hours passed, Mary Jane grew weaker and weaker. She was very happy; and about midnight there came a change. A beautiful light shone on her face; her eye was fixed upon something none else could see; and about one o'clock the angels took her away. Not a sigh, not a struggle marked the last moment. It was just before Christmas Day; and

what a happy one she spent! Her companions celebrated the birthday of Jesus on earth, but she is in His presence, where there is "fulness of joy."

Breast the Wave, Christian.

"Breast the wave, Christian,
When it is strongest;
Watch for day, Christian,
When the night's longest.
Onward and upward still
Be thine endeavour;
The rest that remaineth
Will be for ever.

Fight the fight, Christian,
Jesus is o'er thee;
Run the race, Christian,
Heaven is before thee.
He who hath promised
Faltereth never;
The love of Eternity
Flows on for ever.

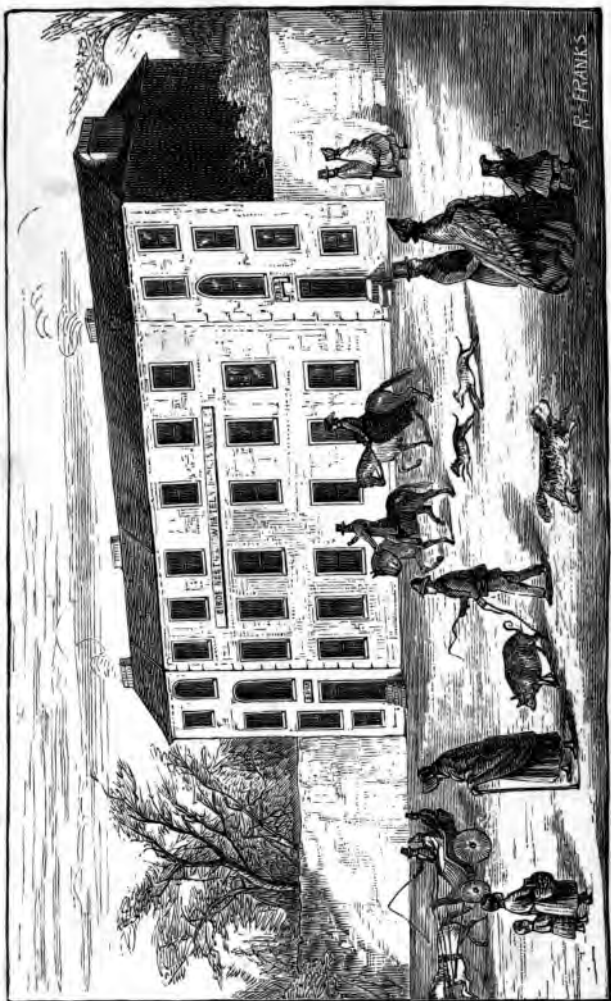
Lift the eye, Christian,
Just as it closeth;
Raise the heart, Christian,
Ere it repositeth.
Thee, from the love of Christ,
Nothing can sever;
Mount when thy work is done,
Praise Him for ever."

CHAPTER XII.

"IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE."

Now I think I must tell you something about Christmas time in the Birds' Nest; and how the *real* Holly and Ivy, and the real time of joy, comes to the poor Birdies. If I give you the history of Christmas, eighteen hundred and sixty-two, it will do for a specimen. Well, there is a kind gentleman who lives near the Nest, and who very often watches the procession of one hundred and fifty boys and girls going to church on Sundays, and sees their good behaviour there.

About a fortnight before Christmas time, a very kind thought came into his head and heart. It was this:—I will give those dear children a *real* Christmas dinner — beef and plum-pudding. He asked a lady to manage it for him, and he would pay the money. This




lady had a kind heart and a wise head, and so she sat down to make her calculations. There were raisins, and currants, and sugar, and suet, and flour, and bread, and beef, and potatoes to be bought; and the first question was—how much of each would be wanted? and the second was—how such a great dinner should be cooked? Both these questions required consultation and calculation, but at last the plans were all laid, and the children were told what their kind friend was going to do for them. There was a great clapping of hands, and a great shout of joy at the news. And from that time till Christmas-day, there was as much pleasure in the hearts of the poor little children in the Nest, as there is in the hearts of the little children who live in happy homes, and have kind papas, and mammas, and elder brothers and sisters, who they knew are preparing joyful surprises for Christmas-day.

At length the Christmas-eve came, and on that day the preparations were to be made. Early in the morning, three carts, loaded with ivy, and holly with red berries, arrived at the gate. And the boys were sent to carry it all in, which they accomplished in a wonderfully

short time. Then, with the help of the girls, and directed by the schoolmaster and mistress, the room was dressed up. Such a happy time it was, the sun shone in at the windows, and the hum of the mingled happy voices was right pleasant to hear. "Many hands made light work." And by the middle of the day the decorations were finished ; then came the girls with brooms to sweep out the rubbish, and that was all that could be done in that room for that day at least, and the work was finished. Not so in the kitchen. There a number of the elder girls, headed by the kind matron, Miss Howard, were most busily engaged all day long, making those most wonderful things, *plum puddings!*

It was eleven o'clock before they all got to bed, but no matter ; they were all too excited to be sleepy. And very early on Christmas morning the little ones were roused, that there might be time for much extra combing, and washing, and dressing ; really I do think the big girls had made up their minds that every little face should be polished so as to be a regular looking-glass, reflecting the brightness around.



But all this washing and dressing was over by breakfast time, and then the children went to church, all except a few elder girls, who had to stay at home to lay the tables. This was accomplished with even more care than usual. The cloths were quite clean, and the knives and forks polished up in a marvellous manner.

The meat was roasting in the kitchen, and the puddings were boiling in the boiler, when the little ones came home from church, and they were all seated in their places at the tables, when the kind gentleman and his family and other friends came in. It did not take long to place the dishes on the tables, and then grace was sung, and several kind friends set to work to cut up the joints, and soon all were helped.

While the plates were being washed for the pudding, the children sang some hymns, and so gave pleasure to the friend who was giving them so much. It was four o'clock before this happy dinner was over.

I don't know whether the kind gentleman thought of the words of Jesus,—but I am sure many others did—"When thou makest

a feast, call the poor . . . They cannot recompense thee, but thou *shalt* be recompensed." Oh, yes! in doing good there is a recompense now, in the joy and lightness of heart — and there is a recompense hereafter, for will not Jesus one day say—"Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me: inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me"!

These promises, and the smile of Jesus, are the HOLLY AND IVY to us,—the bright things of winter time. But when they are all fulfilled, and we live in His presence, where there is fullness of joy, there will be no winter time, for "the trees yield their fruit every month, and there is no night there."

But we have not done with Christmas time yet. There were some little children living in England, and they wanted to give pleasure to the poor little Nestlings, and they set to work and made a large number of bags with pincushions and thimbles in them for the elder

girls, and they dressed dolls for the little ones, and when I heard of this, I said, "We must have a Christmas tree to hang all these nice things on. Other children heard of this plan, and they took up the idea, and some sent balls and tops, and some sent little books and markers; and at length there were enough things for each child to have something. I could not tell you what idea the poor little children had of a Christmas tree; some of them had never seen such a thing, and so they puzzled over it, till they dreamed about it, and at length made up their minds that it must be something *very* wonderful indeed. And so it was.

We did not set up the tree till one day in January. The children's friend, Mr. Dallas, was coming over, and so we waited for him, for it was to be a regular day of rejoicing. We opened the folding doors, and so made two great rooms into one, and then we set up the tree in the middle. It reached up very high, there were some pretty flags at the top, and each article on the tree had the name of a child upon it. Tables were set up around the tree, for the children were to have tea and cake, and they were to be questioned, and

friends were to be present to listen, and share the fun. The little children of the Nest were not allowed to see the preparations till all was ready, but they did not mind this, for *they* had a secret, too, and felt themselves quite important. I think I must let you into their secret. Well, you know Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and Miss Howard thought the Nestlings should, on this grand occasion, taste of the pleasure of giving. So she got a piece of canvas and prepared the pattern of a lamp-stand, to be given by the children to Mr. Dallas. She determined that each child should at least put in a stitch. This was not very easy to manage, but if Miss Howard once set her heart upon a thing, she would be sure to carry it out. She arranged the children all in a row around the school-room, then she took a chair and sat at the head of them, with the work in her hand. She then gave the order for a very slow march, and as each child came up to her, it put in one stitch. In this way all had a little share; and the work was afterwards finished by some of the elder girls. It was quite a pretty lamp-stand. When it was ready a letter was writ-

ten, signed by all the children who could write, and the little ones' names were put down for them ; and this was the children's secret.

Well, at last the time came, and friends assembled ; amongst them many of the members of "The Children's Association;" some who had given the things for the tree, but not all. Then the children marched in and took their places ; but the little ones opened their eyes so wide, and wondered so much at the beautiful tree, that they had to be lifted into their seats ; one of them tumbled over a form ; he did not know what he was doing. Very soon Mr. Dallas came, and then the children sang a song of welcome, which had been composed for the occasion, to the tune of "Some folks like to sigh." I must put it in here for those who did not hear it—

“ Welcome, welcome home,
 Father dear, father dear,
Welcome, welcome home,
 We're glad to see you here.
Join all with heart and voice,
 And glad hosannas raise,
We'll swell the song,
 Our Jesus' name we'll praise.

Once we wandered far,
 Father dear, father dear,
Once we wandered far,
 But you have brought us here.
Join all with heart and voice,
 And loud hosannas raise,
We'll swell the song,
 Our Jesus' name we'll praise.

Erin's children sighed,
 Long ago, long ago,
Your arms were opened wide
 To shelter them from woe.
Join all with heart and voice,
 And loud hosannas raise,
We'll swell the song,
 Our Jesus' name we'll praise.

Erin's children love
 To welcome you, to welcome you,
You've taught us how above
 We'll meet the Saviour, too.
Join all with heart and voice,
 And loud hosannas raise,
We'll swell the song,
 Our Jesus' name we'll praise.

In the better land,
 Father dear, father dear,
A glorious angel band
 Will welcome you up there.
Join all with heart and voice,
 And loud hosannas raise,
We'll swell the song,
 Our Jesus' name we'll praise."

When this had been sung, and tea and cake

finished, the smallest child, a little boy with rosy cheeks and curly hair, was lifted up on the table beside Mr. Dallas, and he handed him first the letter, which Mr. Dallas read aloud, and then he gave the paper parcel, and Mr. Dallas opened it and expressed his delight and his thanks. And then he took the little boy in his arms, and kissed him, and blessed him; and he told the children the kiss and the blessing was for them all; and all the children looked very much pleased; and then they answered some questions nicely; and after that the pretty things were taken from the tree, and given round to the children; and there was such joy, and such wonder, and such looking at each other's things as never was known before. And then we thought all the fun was over; but no, we were mistaken. A strange gentleman was present, and he was so interested in the little children, that he came forward and said that he had a nice magic-lantern, which he would be very glad to bring and show to the children, if he might be permitted to do so. Of course all were delighted; and so the magic-lantern was brought, and the happy day had a very happy

ending. And I think you will all agree with me in thinking that the children of The Birds' Nest had indeed, what we wish to every one of you—

A Happy Christmas!

Christmas Day.

'Tis Christmas Day—glad voices
Awake the solemn sound,
And happy voices in our home,
And healthful looks around.
Why do we thus keep Christmas morn?
It is the day when Christ was born.

With little gifts that tell our love,
With garlands on the wall,
With thankful hearts and helpful hands,
We keep a festival.
Why do we thus keep Christmas morn?
It is the day when Christ was born.

Full eighteen hundred years ago,
Christ Jesus came on earth :
He came, He rose, He died for us—
We thank God for His birth.
And therefore we keep Christmas morn,
The day our Saviour Christ was born.

Christ healed the sick, and helped the poor,
While He was here on earth.
Do what you can to be like Him,
This morning of His birth.
Help some one to keep Christmas morn,
The day our Saviour Christ was born.

CHAPTER XIII.

"THE MEMORY OF THE JUST IS BLESSED."—Prov. x. 7.

I HAVE told you a great deal about the history of the Nest, and now I think I ought to tell you what it is like now. Well, to begin with the outside. It is just what the picture represents—a great oblong stone building, not at all like a real bird's nest ; I wish it was. I should like to have had it a cozy-looking place, with all sorts of nooks about it, porched doors, and dormer windows, and little chimneys popped about the roof ; and then it would have been my taste to have roses, and ivy, and creeping plants climbing up, and round about the windows and chimneys. And there should have been a nice green field round about, surrounded by a good quickset hedge. All this would have been very delightful, but would have cost a good deal of money. And do you know we

were obliged to put away all idea of beauty when we considered the plans for The Nest. The great problem we had to solve was, how to accommodate the largest number of children for the smallest sum of money. And after thinking and planning a great deal, we were obliged to take the plan that was the very simplest possible. It is ugly, I allow, outside, but it is economical and useful. The beauty is all inside. Who cares about the casket when compared with the precious jewels it contains? who cares about the purse when compared with the money it contains? And so we do not care about the outside of the house, when we think of the precious jewels that are there being polished and prepared for the Saviour's casket. We are content that no money has been wasted; and though a great deal has been spent—much more than we at first thought would have been enough—yet it is all put to good practical purposes.

I have elsewhere described the plan of the building; now let us peep inside and see what goes on there. It is just break of day, on a fine spring morning. The green blinds of the great dormitories are drawn down, but through

the line left at the edge, a bright beam of sunlight stretches in; it rests on a little iron cot-bed covered with a bright patchwork quilt; it kisses the rosy cheek of a curly-headed sleeper; he wakes up and looks round on his sleeping companions. Forty-five such little iron beds, inhabited by forty-five such sleepers, are in that room; but they are not to sleep much longer: one after another awakes, and before very long somewhere about a dozen of the elder girls come in, and the little ones are soon carried off to the washing-rooms down stairs, where they are washed, and dressed, and brushed, and then turned out into the play-ground to wait for breakfast.

Some time before the streak of sunlight roused up the little boy in the infants' dormitory, the elder boys were up and dressed, beds were neatly made, and if you want to know where the boys are, you must listen for the sounds of scrubbing-brush, shoe-brush, or knife-board, for this is the time for household work for the boys; and very much delighted they are to be permitted to take their share. Do you know we are quite proud of our boys, they are such pleasant, industrious fellows, and

so fond of work. Just before breakfast-time these busy workers assembled in their washing-room, to change their clothes and wash; and when the breakfast-bell rings at nine o'clock, boys, girls, and infants are all ready to march into the dining-room.

The sun never shone upon a happier set of children. It is a comfort to look at them seated round the tables, each provided with a good piece of bread, and a little tin can filled with hot cocoa. Breakfast is soon despatched, and then there is a run in the play-ground; and at ten o'clock the children divide into three companies—boys, girls, and infants,—each company marching into its respective school. And now begins new work, mental work, cheerful, happy seeking for the knowledge of which many of the dear children were deprived so long. In any section of these schools you may have sweet hymns sung by first and second voices in beautiful harmony. You will get wonderful answering in Scripture texts and doctrine, and you will be surprised to find how much lessons are loved.

While school is going on, cloaks, bonnets, and hats are brought out and hung on pegs

around the dining-room, each peg having a number on it, each garment hung on it having the same number, which number again belongs to the owner of these two garments. All this is in preparation for the walk which is to take place after dinner.

At three o'clock school is over, and after a run in the play-ground, all take their places at the tables, and enjoy a simple but plentiful dinner, and then the walking-dress is put on, and all march out for regular exercise.

Returning from the walk, there are various small occupations till, at six o'clock, another meal of cocoa and bread, and then the infants are all washed and put to bed, and the elder children go into evening-school.

This is the regular routine of every day but Saturday and Sunday. On Saturday school is over at twelve o'clock, and the elder girls immediately set to work to scrub floors, which keeps them busy almost all day. On Sunday the children go to church, and have a Sunday-School ; it is a very happy day.

Several little girls have responsibilities all to themselves. One has to take care of the tins, another of the knives and forks ; another

is mistress of the wardrobe. She has to keep the room, with one hundred and fifty shelves it, neat and tidy ; and many of them are mothers to a certain number of the smallest children.

I only wish all the readers of this book could visit The Birds' Nest ; I think they would all agree in thinking it the very happiest home for poor children they ever saw ; and a noble monument to the memory of her who first thought of having a Birds' Nest, and of her dear mother, the late Mrs. Whately, who, while the building was being erected, left her earthly labours to enter her heavenly rest. Mother and daughter had been united in works of self-denying love in their lives. 'Twas fitting that their names should be associated in so appropriate a memorial.

CHAPTER XIV.

AFTER the first edition of "Holly and Ivy" had been printed, another of the nestlings was called away. Her history forms part of the Report for 1863; it must also be inserted here for the encouragement of all those who, by helping on the Birds' Nest, are setting children's feet in the pilgrim's path.

She was a little orphan pilgrim. She had met with many trials on the way, but on Monday evening, the 1st of December, she reached her Father's house, and the Angel at the gate welcomed her, for he saw that she had been washed and made clean in the blood of the Lamb, and on her forehead Jesus had written His new name.

I want to tell you something about her pilgrimage, and how

"With a childlike trust she gave her hand
To the mighty Friend by her side;
The only thing she said to Him

As He took it was—‘Hold it fast,
Suffer me not to lose my way,
And bring me home at last.’”

The little pilgrim's name was Annie. She once had a kind, loving father, who took great care of her; but he was taken ill, and he lay for a very long time in consumption. A kind clergyman used to attend him, and read the Bible and pray, and the sick man learned to trust in Jesus. When he was near death he was very anxious about his little girl, and he begged of the clergyman to take care of her. He said he would.

The father died, and little Annie was left an orphan. The young clergyman did not know what to do with the little girl he had promised to take care of; so he wrote to his mother in Dublin, who got her admitted into the Birds' Nest. This was about four years ago. Annie was very happy in the Birds' Nest. She had a mild, loving spirit, and she learned very quickly the hymns and verses of Scripture; and these hymns and verses were good seed, falling in good ground; watered by the Holy Spirit of God, they took root and grew up, and brought forth good fruit.

Annie was a very delicate child, and very

often was unable to attend school; but about a year ago she became more delicate, and we had to send her to the Adelaide Hospital, where she spent many months. She had a disease of the heart, and suffered a great deal of pain; but she was very patient, and was much beloved by those around her; she was in the children's ward, and used to talk so nicely to the other children. One of them, who had come from the Birds' Nest, had very sore eyes; and Annie was so glad when we lent her story-books to read aloud to the blind one.

While Annie was in this ward, a little nestling died in a bed quite near to her. It was a very happy death-bed, so happy that Annie told me she should not be afraid when death came to her, if she thought she should die like Mary Jane.

When summer time came Annie grew better, and she returned to the Birds' Nest, to the great joy of the dear children there; but she did not stay very long. In the beginning of August she had a very severe attack of illness. We thought she would have died then. She was not at all afraid; her trust was in Jesus.

From this illness she partially recovered, but was soon again an inmate of an hospital, where

she remained but a short time. It did not seem likely that she would ever be well, and so, instead of sending her back to the Birds' Nest, her kind friend put her to lodge with a good old Christian woman, who could nurse her and comfort her last days. You see her pilgrim path was a very rough one, but she had placed her hand in that of Jesus, and she knew He would guide her right. From this time Annie's health rapidly declined. She suffered a great deal of pain, but was so very patient through it all, it was quite a pleasure to do anything for her. Her trust in Jesus was unshaken, and she calmly waited for the change she knew was coming. She had not a shadow of doubt or fear. Just three days before her death there came a change in her symptoms, and we knew that her death was rapidly approaching. There was no difficulty in telling her this; she was quite ready. She received the news with a beaming smile. "I hope it will be very soon," she said. Her breathing was so bad that she could not lie down, so she sat day and night on a little stool, leaning her head upon the side of her bed. When any of us went to see her, she would so gratefully exchange the bed for our shoulder or knee. On Saturday

night she would not allow any one to sit up with her, only she had a candle lighted, and said Jesus would be with her. Several times in the night, when her kind nurse got up to look at her, she said, "I'm so happy! I'm going to God; not to-day, but to-morrow."

I never saw anything so beautifully calm as the dying-time of this dear child. It did so remind me of the beautiful hymn—

"Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are,
While on His breast I lean my head,
And breathe my life out sweetly there."

Early on Sunday morning I visited Annie, being anxious to spend as much time as possible with her before she was taken hence.

She received me with her sweet, grateful smile, and so gladly changed her position to lay her tired head on my shoulder.

For a few moments she slept, and waking, said, "I have been thinking a great deal of what you read about the gates of heaven, and the Angel at the gate ready to let in all Christ's children." Then, looking up with an earnest gaze, she said, "Do you think there is any fear of me?" It was a solemn question. How my

heart rejoiced at that moment to know there was no fear. I said, "Surely not; you believe in Jesus, do you not?"

"Yes," replied the child; "I've trusted Him long. No no," she added, "there's no fear. He said Himself, 'Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.'" After this her breathing was very laboured; her eyes were closed; we almost thought she was going. Her nurse said, "Dear Annie! how patiently she suffers." The child roused herself. "Why shouldn't I suffer patiently?" she said. "It's nothing to what Jesus suffered for me." I said, "He looked for comforts, and found none." "I have plenty," she said, with a grateful smile.

The dear child could not talk much at a time. Only at intervals she spoke her thoughts; some of them were very beautiful.

"I have been thinking very often of the very first verse you left me to sleep upon, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' They are HIS OWN WORDS."

"I think the angels will very soon come for me. I shall see Jesus. Don't you think I shall lay my head on His breast?" "Yes," I said, "like John did at the last Supper." "Only,"

she said, "I shall have my crown—I shall be like HIM."

"I shall leave you soon, but we shall have a better meeting than this; there will be no pain nor sorrow."

Speaking of a dear little friend whom we both loved, who was in glory, she said, "When you come to heaven, Emily and me will both be at the gate with the angel to welcome you. Oh, I wish I was there now!" "Well, dear," I said, "we must wait patiently." "Yes, yes; 'rest in the Lord; wait patiently for Him.'"

Later in the day another friend went to see her. She seemed rejoiced to see him, and said, "Oh, Mr. H——, I'm going to God very fast; pray for me." He prayed, and then talked to her of the things she loved, reminding her of her hymns, referring to one—

"I'm a pilgrim and a stranger,
Rough and thorny is the road."

"That is not mine now," she said—

"I'm a pilgrim GOING HOME!"

All that night she continued in the same beautiful frame of mind. When they gave her a

little wine, she drank it, then said, "No more. I'll drink no more till I drink in the kingdom of God." Once she said, "I'll give such a *knock* at the gate! No, no, I forgot; I shall have no need to knock—the gate is always open."

Early on Monday morning I was again with her. She expressed a great wish to say good-bye to the kind friend who had been, as she said, a mother to her. We sent for her, and as soon as possible she came. Dear Annie took her hand, and thanked her for all her love and kindness. Seeing a tear, she said, "You must not fret. I shall be happy. When I get to heaven, I shall see my father; I'll tell him how good you've been to me." At intervals through the day she spoke, continuing in the same happy state. Often she asked, "Do you think they'll come soon? Oh, I want to go to God."

In the afternoon I had to leave her to attend to other duties; but another of her friends took my place.

As the time passed away, poor Annie suffered very much, but bore it most patiently. After half an hour of silent suffering she suddenly became calm. Looking up at her friend, she said—

"Do you know why I am easy now?"

"No, dear."

"I asked Jesus to take away my pain, and He has done it," she said.

After this she fell into a kind of sleep.

About three weeks before this time we had been in great trouble about a little girl who had been forced away from the Birds' Nest to be put into a convent. Annie was very fond of this child, and she prayed very earnestly that she might come back. Often she inquired if Agnes had gone to the convent. She said she would never cease praying for her. Now see how God answers prayer. On that last afternoon of Annie's life, little Agnes was brought back. She had resisted all entreaties and bribes to enter the convent-school, and now she was come back to beg for re-admittance. I hastened down to Annie's lodging to tell her the good news, but it was too late—her spirit had fled a few moments before, and nothing but the lifeless clay lay there. Her work was finished with her life, and she was gone

"Home! where the Bridegroom takes
The purchase of His love;
Home! where the Father waits
To welcome saints above."

On Wednesday morning dear Annie was laid in her grave. The words of our beautiful Burial Service, repeated over one who had died in such a hope, seemed to gather new force and meaning—"We commit her body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be like His glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself."

"I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: Yea, saith the Spirit; that they may rest from their labours."

H Y M N .

"We speak of the realms of the blest,
That country so bright and so fair,
And oft are its glories confessed—
But what must it be to be there!

We speak of its pathways of gold,
Its walls decked with jewels so rare;
Its wonders and pleasures untold—
But what must it be to be there!

We speak of its peace and its love,
The robes which the glorified wear,
The songs of the blessed above—
But what must it be to be there !


We speak of its freedom from sin,
From sorrow, temptation, and care,
From trials without and within—
But what must it be to be there !

Do thou, Lord, 'midst pleasures or woes,
For heaven our spirit prepare,
That shortly we also may know
And feel what it is to be there !”

CHAPTER XV.

I AM afraid you will think that a great many of our Birds' Nest children die, because I have told you so many histories of those who are gone. In reality there are only thirteen in all since the beginning, four years ago. I think the happy deaths are very encouraging. But this chapter is to be about some of the children who are alive and well, and in the Nest now. I want to tell you where they came from, and how they got into the Nest.

When I was writing the thirteenth chapter, and describing the "curly-headed sleeper," I was thinking of a dear little boy, about five years old, who has been now just one year in the Nest. His name is David. He was our youngest Nestling for a few months ; now there is one younger named Dickey. Dickey has been adopted by a little boy not very much older than himself, who hopes to collect all the



money for him. These very little ones only cost £6 a year.

David cannot remember having a father or a mother ; for when he was only a very little baby, his father went to America, hoping to send for his wife and little baby very soon. But he was never heard of again ; and the poor woman was so miserable, that she asked her sister to take care of David, and she went to America, too. I suppose she thought she should find her husband, but she never wrote a letter, nor was ever heard of again. Little David found a happy home with his kind Aunt. She loved him as her own. She was a Protestant, but her husband was a Roman-catholic. He never let her go to church, and he told her she must not read her Bible. But she kept a Bible hidden in David's cradle, and she used to read it when she was all alone, and she used to pray that the little boy might be one of Jesus' lambs.

Some time passed away, and then there were three little children besides David in the house ; and their father began to think it was rather a plague to have one *not* his own, and he said to his wife one day, " I won't allow you to keep David any longer ; he must go to the poor-

house." Now this poor woman loved David just as much as her own, and she said she would rather live on a crust than part with him. But all her love and care was of no use ; the man grew more and more determined that David should go.

In her distress the poor woman took the child to the house of one of the ladies belonging to the Birds' Nest Committee. She saw the servant-man at the door, and he took her message up stairs. He was told that the Birds' Nest was full, and it was no use taking up time to talk to the woman.

" Ah, ma'am," said he, " he is such a *beauty*. I'm sure you would find a place for him if you only saw him."

Then he brought the little child up in his arms to show, and we felt very much inclined to agree with the good man ; but it was impossible. However, when he went down stairs, he comforted the poor woman by telling her that he would watch for a vacancy, and let her know about it. When he said this, the little boy put his arm round the old man's neck, and then patted his cheek, saying—

" You will be my fadder now."

Some few months after this, a little girl was taken out of the Nest by her friends ; and without saying a word to any one, the old man set off to the cottage of David's aunt.

"Now is your time," said he ; "bring David and we will get him in."

So the good woman came off; and, after a little while, the Committee decided to take in little David. So we dressed him in a pretty plaid frock some one had sent for the Nest, and a nice holland overall, and he was heartily welcomed by the children at the Nest, partly because he was so young, and partly because he was so pretty ; for he had nice flaxen baby curls all over his head, and bright little cheeks, and blue eyes. He was soon made a great pet of. I hope he won't be spoiled ; but we don't think he will, for it takes a great deal of love to make up to a little child the loss of its mother. David's life has not been at all a miserable one ; in this respect he is very different from most of the other children. One little boy, now about seven years old, was presented for admission about two years ago. I think I never saw such a miserable little child in my life. I did not see him until after the Committee had decided to

take him in. He was thought to be seven years old ; and the day I expected him I had prepared clothes which I thought would have fitted him. But he came—a miserable little object, about the size of a child of three—a poor, worn face ; his front teeth gone ; his dress—how shall I describe it ? There was a ragged sort of cape over the shoulders, and then a piece of old calico sewed round his body, so inlaid with dirt that it was almost impossible to touch it. But we took a pair of scissors, and cut the stitches. I am sure this must have been around him at least a year. He cried bitterly when it was taken off ; but when first a clean little shirt, and then a warm petticoat, and then a long-sleeved frock were put upon him, he laughed for joy, and stroked his frock down with his poor little hand. “Nice, nice,” he said ; and soon he was in the Birds’ Nest, and had a snug warm bed to sleep in, and plenty of food. We had a great deal of trouble with this little boy. He had been so starved that it was difficult to get him into anything like health ; but he is quite strong now, and is learning to read and write nicely.

About three years ago a Scripture-Reader

visited a very old and very poor woman. He found she had four grandchildren to support, who had been deserted years before by father and mother.

They were all Roman-catholics, and utterly ignorant ; and besides, they were almost naked and quite starving. The Reader told the grandmother of a ragged school that was quite near, and asked her to send the children in time for breakfast the next day. They went, and soon became greatly in love with the school, and the nice things they learned there.

But one day they were missed by the teachers. Another day, and another day ; and they did not come. Then the Reader went to visit them, and he found the four children weeping over the dead body of their grandmother. They had now no relative to care for them ; but their sad case was made known, and the two elder boys were taken into the RAGGED BOYS' HOME, and the two little ones found a happy home in the Birds' Nest. And so they are all under the tender care of the Good Shepherd, who watches over His little lambs, and causes His people to go after them, and find them, and bring them to His fold.

A great many of the children in the Birds' Nest have got no fathers, and a great many have got no mothers. I could not give the history of them all. If I did, it would only be like the roll mentioned in Ezekiel, "full of lamentations, and mourning, and woe." From what I have said, you can imagine something of their former misery. I had much rather tell you, as I have done, of their present happiness; and so lead those who have been our helpers to thank God that He has made them the means of so much blessing, and encourage others who have not yet entered upon the service of the heavenly Master, to join in this work for Him, that *that* may be a very large company to whom He will one day say — "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto ME."

CHAPTER XVI.

"WHATSOEVER THY HAND FINDETH TO DO, DO IT WITH
THY MIGHT."

THERE will be some readers of this book who will want to know more about the Children's Association. You have already read the origin of it, and how it gradually increased, but you have not heard anything of the means the dear children use to help us. I must tell you.

You know there are a great many of them in different parts of the land, and some work in one way, and some another, according to their different tastes and opportunities ; but there is one way in which many of them help, which is better than any other. I mean by PRAYER. Some of them join together to pray once a week ; some appoint a certain time to pray alone, and some get their friends to help them to pray. Sometimes when we are in

great difficulty we write letters, and ask all the children to pray for a supply of our needs. The first time we did this was in October, 1861, when there were only about forty members of the Association.

In that month of October the Committee met, and they looked at the accounts, and they thought of the number of children, and they said, We shall want three hundred pounds before the close of the year, where shall we get it? and one said, "I don't know;" and another said, "I have got in all my cards;" and another said, "I don't know a single creature I can ask for money;" and another said, "we must not take in any more children, and perhaps there are some we can turn away." It seemed as if a dark cloud stood before us, and we could not see our way. Then there came a little bright opening, and showed some of the silver edges of the cloud. Yes, there was light beyond; Jesus had said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." So one said, "Wait a little; we will pray." Then the Secretary of the Children's Association wrote a letter to each member, telling them of the trouble, and asking them to pray that the year might be

closed out of debt. Sunday, the 3rd of November, was fixed upon to begin to pray. In one family the letter arrived just as they were going to family prayer, on Saturday; a little baby-child of two and a half remained on her knees after the rest had got up, then she went to her mamma and said, "Mamma, I sure God will answer; I've prayed already." The children all got their letters, and made their one request. It was a special one, and we trusted God would give us a special answer; and so He did. Good measure did our Father give unto us; all we wanted, and forty-two pounds to begin the new year with. And so we were greatly encouraged, and began the year 1862 with a good heart.

We were greatly delighted to find, on closing the accounts, that the Children's Association had worked so heartily, that in that year it produced one hundred and eleven pounds, besides a good deal of needlework and a number of patchwork quilts for the children's beds. So you see how prayer in this case led to work, and how God answered the prayers of such little children.

Another time we were very much in need,

and a friend sent fifty pounds ; when this was mentioned, a very little girl looked up joyfully and said, "I helped to get it." When asked how? she said she had been in her mamma's room to ask God to send us money. I am sure many dear children will be able to join this little one in saying, "I helped to get it." God only knows how many of the young collectors there are, who go in the dark to pray, and then come out to watch for answers to their prayers. He loves to see them come, He loves to hear their young voices, and He loves to answer their requests. Go on, dear children ; you don't know how strong you are when you have God for a helper. You may sometimes have to watch long for an answer, but wait on, pray on ; and if you don't get the answer just in the form you expect, God will give you something better. We must put trust in Him.

The second means used by our little friends in helping us is COLLECTING. We have got nice little cards especially for them, with a picture on the back which represents real ragged children. On these cards sums are gathered from a farthing up to a pound or

more. Some children, who are successful collectors, have filled two or three cards in the course of a year, and raised from five to eight pounds.

Some kind ladies in different places have gathered around them little children and given them cards ; and between them they have been enabled to support a child, or perhaps two, in The Birds' Nest. This is a capital plan ; I wish we had more such kind friends. Sunday-school teachers might take it up. This has been done in some places ; Juvenile Missionary Associations have devoted part of their funds to this object, and have got information from the Secretary to read at their meetings. Some friends have collecting-boxes. It would be nice to have them made of rustic work, in the form of a bird's nest. Such boxes would soon be filled, and the making of them would be a pleasure to boys clever in the use of a pen-knife and glue-pot. But I must go on to the third means of helping—*self-denying labour*. I have been greatly delighted in the course of the last few years, to hear of the novel modes of getting money practised by our ingenious young friends. I must mention some of them, as suggestions to others ; for you know we are

told to "provoke one another to love and to good works." And yet there is some danger of our thinking those *good* works, which are, after all, *bad* works. Jesus only, who sees the heart, knows "*how* the gifts are cast into the treasury"; for don't you know, little children, men judge of your hearts by your actions, but Jesus judges of your actions by your heart: and when that is right, even a "cup of cold water" is a most precious gift.

Some dear children have earned money for The Birds' Nest, by learning and repeating hymns and portions of Scripture, for which their kind fathers or teachers reward them. This is doing good in two ways: to the children who learn, and to the poor children who are thus fed. Some *very* little ones I have heard of, are very fond of sugar, and when they are very good, their mamma gives them a lump. When they heard of The Bird's Nest, they determined to save their lumps of sugar and put them in a bag. This they did; and when the bag was full, their mamma bought the saved sugar, and those very little children sent me five shillings for The Nest.

Some little boys have become gardeners for

the sake of the *Nest*, and earn money by weeding, and carrying away the weeds. Very little boys can do this.

Some little girls have largely helped by selling pretty things they have made themselves. In several places there have been juvenile bazaars held by both boys and girls ; and it is quite wonderful what they have been able to do. The children of a Free School in the south of England have had more than one bazaar, in which the articles were sold for pins. I must copy out the account I got of the first of these "pin bazaars." It is a letter from a lady.

"I have much pleasure in forwarding the enclosed thirteen shillings and threepence, a small donation to The Birds' Nest from the poor children of our Girls' Free School. This sum is the proceeds of a *pin bazaar*. The articles were nearly all of their own making, and nothing exceeded one penny or one hundred pins. Some were priced two pins. The admission was by three pins. A few ladies kindly added some cakes, which were cut into slices, and sold for six pins a slice, which added much to the sum total, and to the pleasure of the children. The pins thus obtained were afterwards sold, and realized the sum now sent ; which, although so small, will, I feel, be acceptable, if only to show the kind feelings of our own poor ones for those more destitute little ones."

It was, indeed, accepted. I felt Jesus must look upon those children as He did on the poor woman who cast into the treasury "two mites, which make a farthing."

We want much besides money for 'The Birds' Nest—a great deal of clothing, and quilts to cover the little beds. Many children help us in these things. "As I was writing this very chapter, I received a neat little garment, made for some child in The Birds' Nest by a "motherless little girl." I don't know anything more about her than that, but if she belongs to Jesus, He will not leave her comfortless. Many of our little patchwork quilts have been made by very little children. Some in infant schools, where the infant monitress placed the work, and the infant pupils put in the stitches, until the work was done. Amongst these, six were sent by some poor orphan children. With the parcel they sent the following letter to the children of the Nest:—

"Will you accept these quilts for your little beds as a Christmas present. We are very sorry they are not better, but they are our *first* quilts. 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'

"No more from your affectionate Sisters."

These quilts were put upon the beds of the six smallest children, and they sent the following reply:—

“DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

“We thank you very much for the nice little quilts which you so kindly made and sent to us. We wish you could come and see how nice and comfortable our little beds look, and we would sing some hymns, and repeat a great many texts which we are learning here. We send you a few of our text-cards, that you may learn them, and we will pray that the Holy Spirit may write them on your hearts.

“We remain,

“Your affectionate Brothers and Sisters.”

And then follow six names.

These were very little girls in an institution, but you see they found something to do for Jesus. Oh! there are none too young, none too poor to work for Him. When He talked about it Himself, He never spoke of the great things of this world, but of the loving heart, the kind word, the cup of cold water, given in His name and for His sake.

Of the many children who have joined our Children's Association, some are not with us now. In the midst of their young labours

they have heard the secret message, "The master is come and calleth for *thee*." And they have gone up higher. Short was their working day, but long will be their joyful rest, for of each of these dear ones we have full confidence that they belonged to the fold of the Good Shepherd.

Could these glorified little ones look down upon us from their happy home, I think they would say, "We did not work hard enough for Jesus; do you who are left work harder." I think they would say, "Oh, heaven is such a glorious place; do what you can to bring the poor children here." I think they would say, "There is nothing on earth worth doing, compared with serving our dear Redeemer."

Are there any reading this little book who will take their place amongst the workers? Jesus is looking down upon you now, and longing to have you for His own. He says to you, "My son, give me thine heart." He says to you too, "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard." There is a multitude to be fed—only Jesus knows how it is to be done; but are there not many of you who are like the "lad who had five barley loves and two small

fishes?" Well, bring them to Jesus; He will accept and make them sufficient.

We must never leave our rescued children unfed, unclothed, and uncomforted. Our "Holly and Ivy" must be true evergreen, only looking fresher, and sparkling brighter, for the depth of the winter time, and the desolation around.

But it does not grow of itself, therefore we want many hands to gather and bring it. If you want useful work—if you want pleasant work—come and help us to brighten up the lives of desolate little children; come and help to supply

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